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**Produced by:** MediaCorp & NHK  
**Genre:** Documentary  
**Format:** 1 episode x 52 mins  
**Language:** English  
**Email:** sharonloh@mediacorp.com.sg  
**Tel:** +65 6350 3221



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**Produced by:** Onion Media  
**Genre:** History  
**Format:** 6 episodes x 60 mins  
**Language:** English  
**Distribution:** Bomanbridge Media  
**Email:** info@bomanbridge.tv  
**Tel:** +65 6224 4211



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**Produced by:** FWA Media  
**Genre:** Lifestyle/Sports  
**Format:** 165 episodes x 30 mins  
**Language:** English  
**TX:** WFN (Canada), Foxtel (Australia), Seven Network (Australia), TV4 Sweden, First HDTV (Russia), Onlinefishing.tv (UK), MTV3 (Finland), Bahry (Middle East)  
**Distribution:** Sunrise Entertainment  
**Email:** chris@sunriseent.com.sg  
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**Produced by:** New Atlantis  
**Genre:** Wildlife  
**Format:** 1 episode x 60 mins  
**Language:** English  
**Distribution:** Bomanbridge Media  
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**Produced by:** Beach House Pictures  
**Genre:** Factual  
**Format:** 10 episodes x 60 mins  
**Language:** English  
**TX:** 3NET  
**Distribution:** Off The Fence  
**Email:** bo@offthefence.com  
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SEPTEMBER + OCTOBER 11

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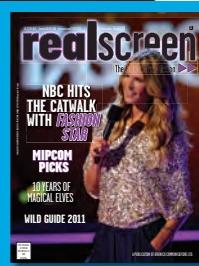
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Alma Har'e'l's *Bombay Beach* is one of our MIPCOM Picks this year. What else made the list?



80

*Still Standing* is one of the foreign game show formats set to debut on a U.S. broadcaster.



Australian supermodel and fashion icon Elle Macpherson hosts the upcoming *Fashion Star*, a fashion competition series that's bringing major brands to the table, debuting on NBC early next year. (Page 39)



## BLOW UP THE BOX

Attending the Silverdocs International Documentary Conference this past June in Silver Spring, Maryland, one panel in the program leapt out of the delegate booklet as a "must see." It was the session titled "Changing the Public Perception of Documentary," and it featured panelists ranging from *Street Fight* director Marshall Curry and *Dragonslayer* producer John Baker, to those on the distribution front, including CrowdStarter's Paola Freccero and ro\*co international's Annie Roney. The panel was rounded out by consultant and WhatNottoDoc.com founder Basil Tsiokos and moderated by *indieWIRE* founder Eugene Hernandez.

The discussion centered on how the audience for doc projects can be broadened, and removing whatever stigma the word "documentary" carries for people in 2011. Should it be replaced with something a little more... dare we say "populist?"

Maybe I'm a bit biased, being the editor of a non-fiction magazine, but from where I sit, it's not necessarily the public perception of documentary that needs to change, but perhaps the perception of those within the industry – filmmakers, distributors, programmers – regarding what documentary is and isn't. Being based in Toronto, I watch year-on-year as the Hot Docs festival racks up increases in attendance, with lines stretching for blocks, for docs. This year, the Toronto International Film Festival opened its film fête for the first time with a documentary – a documentary about one of the biggest bands on the planet, yes, but a documentary nonetheless (see page 36).

So from my perspective, the public at large is not indulging in hand-wringing about the virtues or drawbacks of the word "documentary." And within the industry, the debate isn't so much about the word itself but about its definition. Alma Har'el's entrancing *Bombay Beach* (one of this year's MIPCOM Picks, see page 53), has raised an eyebrow or two within the doc community, despite its winning the best documentary award at the Tribeca Film Festival this year, due to choreographed dance and fantasy sequences featuring the cast. The criticisms are akin to the fuss raised over animated documentary *Waltz with Bashir* upon its release.

It's an old story. Personally, I'd like to think that the concepts of innovation and creativity aren't exclusive to scripted properties. Granted, doc programming always has to have non-fiction at its core. But the work of pioneers such as direct cinema icon Allan King and more recently, rabble-rousers such as Michael Moore and "ecstatic truth" chasers (think Herzog), serves to push the genre forward into a new level of acceptance. Pioneers dare to not only invoke that dreaded cliché – "think outside the box" – but they blow the box apart in the pursuit of something new.

Being a pioneer is a risky business. As the saying goes, you can tell who the pioneers are by the arrows in their backs. But maybe the reason we can see those arrows is not because the pioneers are lying in the dirt, but because they're actually walking well ahead of the rest of us, by several paces.

Cheers,  
Barry Walsh  
Editor, *realscreen*

September - October 11 Volume 15, Issue 1

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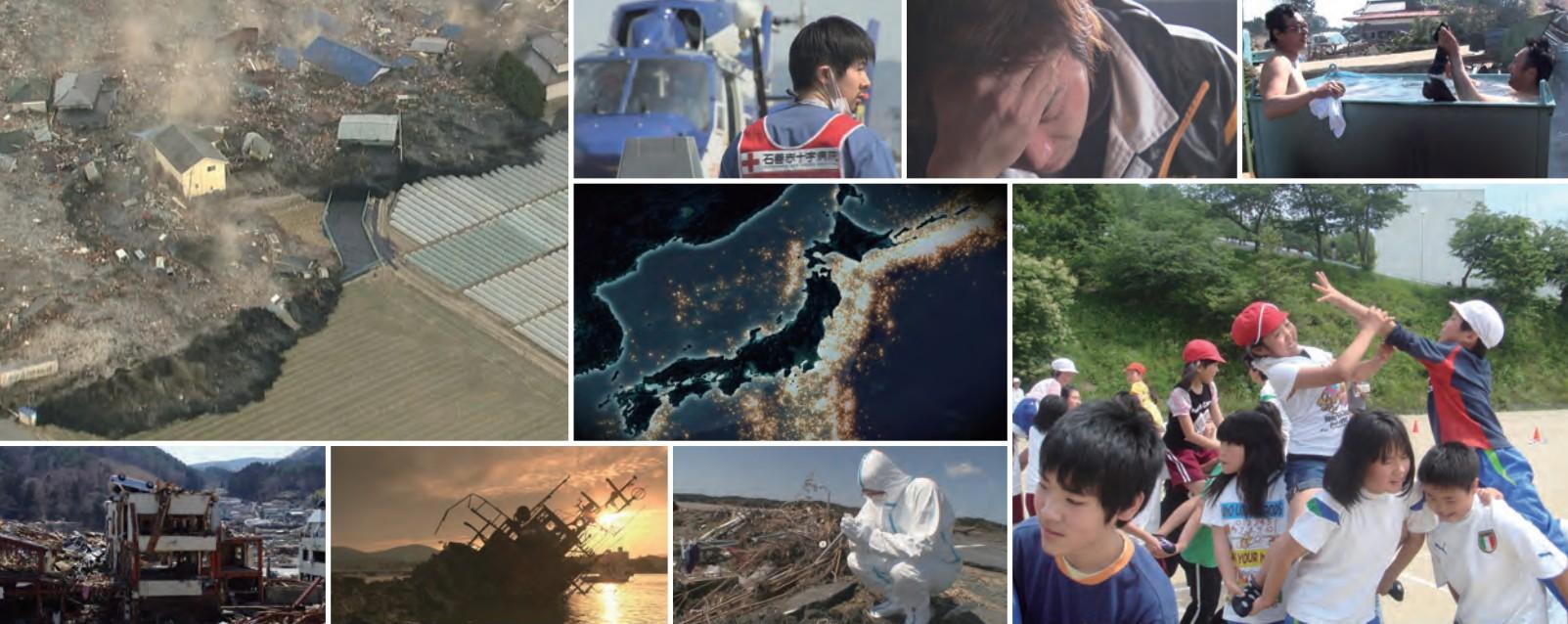
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# Stories to Share: 3.11 and Beyond



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- Fighting the Invisible Enemy
- Battle toward Energy Shift
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- One Day in a Radioactive Town
- Meltdowns
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- Banding Together
- Starting Over
  - Radiation and My Missing Family
  - A Street Called Dream



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## realscreen out & about

**A**s folks from the team squeeze the last few meetings and cocktails for MIPCOM into their diaries, I'm left behind putting the final touches on the content for the second edition of *realscreen's* Branded Entertainment Forum, which takes place in New York City on October 20.

Reprising his role as advisory board chair, **Doug Scott**, president, OgilvyEntertainment, has outdone himself in assembling an advisory board that has seen to it that the event will delve deep into the most relevant, interesting executions of brand-funded entertainment. Co-chaired by **Evan Shapiro**, president IFC tv and Sundance Channel, and **Robert Friedman**, president of media & entertainment, @radical.media, the board is as follows: **Russ Axelrod**, director of branded entertainment, Microsoft Corporation; **Anthony Batt**, president, Katalyst Films; **Frank Cooper III**, CMO, global consumer engagement, PepsiCo; **Bill Davenport**, executive producer, W+K Entertainment; **John Ferriter**, managing director, Octagon Entertainment; **Colby Gaines**, founder, Back Roads Entertainment; **Jae Goodman**, chief creative officer, CAA Marketing; **Kevin McAuliffe**, VP, branded entertainment group, NBCU Cable Branded Entertainment Group; **Noah Syken**, U.S. media planning, sports & entertainment advertising and branded content, IBM; and **Mike Wiese**, director of branded content and entertainment, JWT.

Confirmed speakers at press time include **Paul Day**, VP, branded content and digital media, Cineflix; **Francois Florentiny**, managing director, ITV Studios France; **Peter Naylor**, EVP, digital media sales, NBC Universal; and **Chris Bruss** and **Ed Wise** from Funny Or Die. Check out page 45 of this issue to see how you can register or visit [branded-ent.tv](http://branded-ent.tv).

Meanwhile, we're hard at work programming the 14th edition of the *Realscreen* Summit, taking place in Washington, DC, from January 29-February 1. Our A-list advisory board, helmed by **Robert DeBitetto**, president and general manager, A&E Network and BIO Channel, is committed to working with the *realscreen* team to deliver remarkable content. See ads on pages 75 and 77 for more and to meet the board, and check this space in November for programming highlights. Registration is at an all-time high this year so far, so feel free to visit [realscreensummit.com](http://realscreensummit.com) for details on how to get a head start in setting your schedule.

'til next time, go well  
Claire Macdonald  
VP & publisher  
*realscreen*

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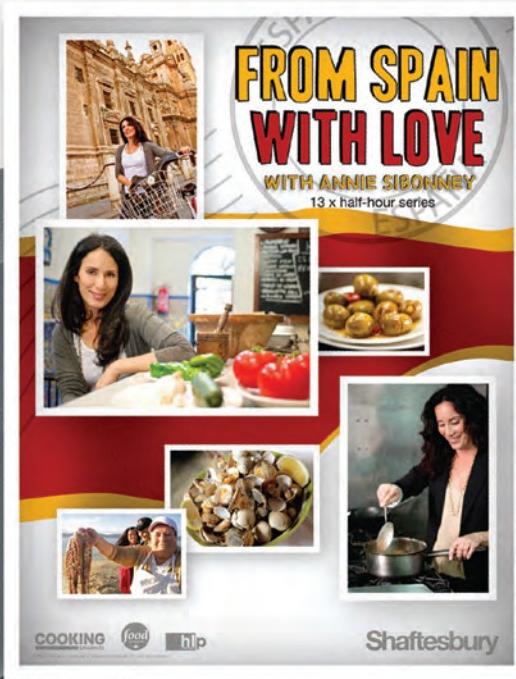


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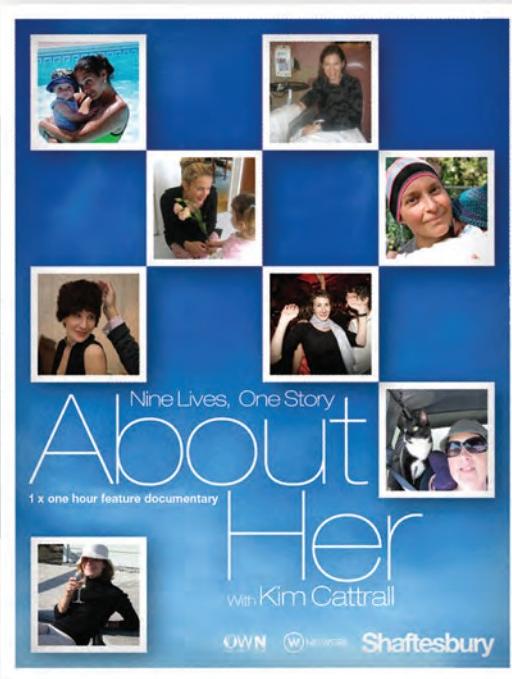
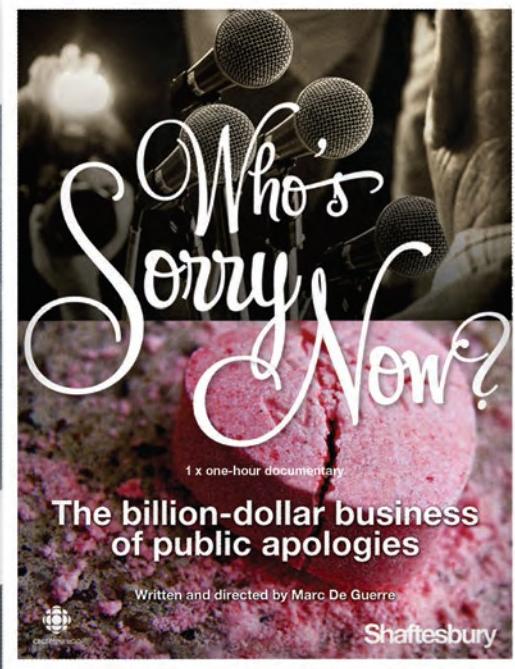


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# LYLE LIFTS OFF



In his first major interview as CEO of National Geographic Channels U.S., David Lyle talks exclusively to *realscreen* about his plans for the network, calling out to new producers and outlining his plans for Nat Geo's international pipeline.

BY ADAM BENZINE

This August saw a major shift in the factual landscape, with David Lyle catapulted from a temporary West Coast development role at National Geographic Channels U.S. (NGC U.S.) to CEO of the company, with responsibility for its global programming.

The meteoric promotion caps a remarkable turnaround for the Australian exec, who joined NGC U.S. following the closure of the Fox Look formats distribution division in March.

Lyle, who had previously run the Fox Reality Channel until its relaunch as National Geographic Channel sister network Nat Geo Wild in 2009, was left in limbo following the second closure of a Fox outpost in as many years. Still, the company was keen to retain the talented exec, who is respected throughout

the industry for having a good eye for programming.

The promotion sees Lyle taking the reins from Fox Sports exec chairman David Hill, who had been overseeing the National Geographic/Fox Cable Networks joint venture in a hands-on capacity while it reorganized. Hill will retain his seat on the Nat Geo board, which Lyle reports to.

The new CEO is now keen to make his mark on NGC U.S., with his first order of business being a call out to indies that the company has not worked with in the past.

"We want to make ourselves a really premiere place for good producers to come to, and that involves us reaching out to producers who haven't worked with us before, whether

they be in LA, New York or wherever," Lyle tells *realscreen*.

"I'd like to continue with a sense of enthusiasm towards multi-episode series – rather than the ones and twos – which have big characters and really hit the ball over the fence. We want to really think outside the box in that regard – it's time for big projects that will grow the channel and the brand."

Lyle's promotion comes in the context of a broader restructure taking place, with a shift in the way NGC U.S. handles its development.

"There are going to be four teams, one of which is going to be devoted to Nat Geo Wild," explains Lyle. "The other three – call them A, B and C – for NGC will not be specialized by sub-genre or that sort of thing. It will just be

David Lyle at the 2011 Realscreen Summit [photo: Rahoul Ghose]

**“ What  
we want to  
do is marry  
development to  
production. ”**

spread equally around so that the different teams all do different sorts of shows.”

These four teams will report to senior VP of content Michael Cascio, who will work closely with senior VP of global development and production Bridget Whalen Hunnicutt.

Each will be headed by a team leader, with VP of global development Charlie Parsons and VPs of development and production Kevin Mohs and Kim Woodard overseeing the three NGC teams; and senior VP Geoff Daniels and senior VP of development Janet Han Vissering overseeing Nat Geo Wild.

“What we want to do is marry development to production,” Lyle adds. “We want the team as a group to see this thing through all the way – right up to delivering on air. I want one holistic approach; no cracks in which things fall through.”

With Lyle’s promotion, an obvious question remains over who will now handle West Coast development for the network. While some speculation had emerged that Hunnicutt would move to head this, Lyle says nothing has been decided yet. What he is sure about, however, is that NGC “certainly needs, at a minimum, at least one development person” on the West Coast.

Beyond the U.S., Lyle’s new role also sees



Lyle says he's "open to modern, contemporary storytelling," but warns, "We won't be going trashy"

him thinking about the roll-out of Nat Geo's American-made programming on the network's international channels. “About three quarters of the programming, or sometimes even more, that is commissioned or greenlit in the United States flows through to the rest of the world,” he says.

“So by being hands-on involved here, I am effectively hands-on involved in the program content as it goes through to the rest of the world. On top of that though, I want to really make sure – the same way that we want these development teams to have a holistic approach – that as this material passes to the rest of the world, it is what the rest of the world can use.

“I want to make our flow of material to the international National Geographics smoother, and then I want to get feedback from them about what they're looking for as well.”

Unlike previous channel toppers, Lyle’s past experience gravitates more towards reality programming than the blue-chip natural history which NGC has been traditionally known for, yet he assures that the channel will remain true to its core values.

“Blue-chip will still be part of our core DNA, no doubt about it,” he says. “I've done a lot of variations of factual entertainment over 25 years in all parts of the world and sure, since 2005, the channel that I was running [Fox

Reality] was in the reality end of the spectrum.

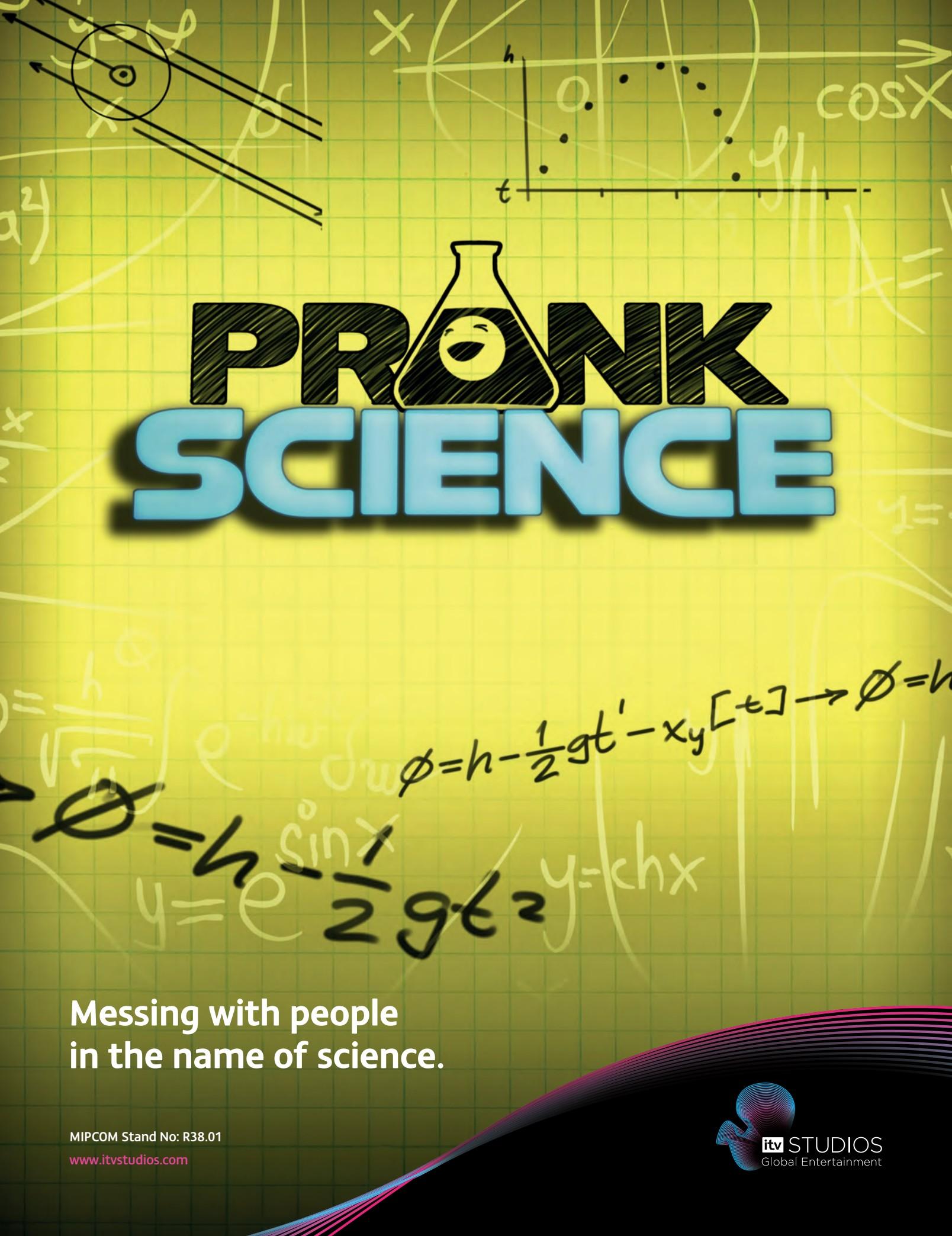
“But there are production techniques which some people call ‘reality’ in docusoaps like *Deadliest Catch* or *Ice Road Truckers*, which I'd call ‘occu-soaps,’ focusing on occupations. So I'm open to modern, contemporary storytelling, some of which has been used in reality TV.”

He adds, however, that what definitely won’t be coming to the network are “those huge competition shows with elimination elements and that sort of thing. And honestly, I’m someone who’s done some things at the tabloid end [of the spectrum], but we won’t be going ‘trashy.’”

“In many cases I divorce the storytelling or filmmaking techniques that various reality shows use from the subject matter,” he continues.

“Our subject matter is going to be on-brand, true to the core. But we will have characters and storylines that involve emotional ups and downs – we’re unapologetic about that.”

Ultimately, Lyle urges producers to “come in and surprise us,” as NGC U.S. looks to do bigger and different sorts of projects. “My invitation is out there,” he says, “my door is always open, truly, and I want new people who haven’t thought of NGC as a home for their babies and their creative ideas to come and try us.” ■



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Crowdfunding site Kickstarter has become a go-to funding source for many documentarians, ranging from established filmmakers such as Nick Broomfield to newcomers to the genre. *Realscreen* finds out more about how and why it works.

BY KELLY ANDERSON



# THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS

Kickstarter or bust. That was the predicament for filmmaker Jennifer Fox and her documentary, *My Reincarnation*. The finished film was ready to launch at international festivals, but a coproducer wasn't able to put in a previously agreed upon portion, leaving Fox with a US\$100,000 funding gap.

"I had exhausted all the individual [donors] I knew, [and] I didn't think any distribution was going to come up with that money fast enough to pay off things like music rights, post-production costs ... It was basically the only choice left, other than going bankrupt," Fox tells *realscreen*.

Thus, the choice was Kickstarter, the crowdfunding platform that has helped to fund projects in 13 creative disciplines, including film, art, comics, dance, design, fashion, technology, and more. The New York City-based initiative has seen more than 11,500 projects successfully reach their funding goals, with more than \$85 million pledged by more than 900,000 backers to date.

Jennifer Fox's doc *My Reincarnation* is the film that's racked up the sixth-highest funding amount through Kickstarter

According to Kickstarter, every week tens of thousands of people pledge millions of dollars to the thousands of projects on the site. Approximately 44% of projects that launch on Kickstarter reach or exceed their funding goal.

Not too shabby for an endeavor cooked up in 2009 by co-founders Perry Chen and Yancey Strickler, who wanted to give creative arts projects a chance to come to fruition through the generous donations of others.

"Traditional funding is looking for a way to make a return on their investment," explains Strickler. "They want to put money into things that make money, but for us, most of the great ideas are the ones that have no intention of making money at all, they're just ideas. We wanted to change that dynamic and allow ideas to be funded on their own merit rather than how much of a buck they might generate for someone else."

Kickstarter has proven to be a viable option for extra doc funding. "Docs alone have raised over \$12 million dollars on Kickstarter and film is over \$30 million overall," Strickler says. "To

be a filmmaker is to be a perpetual fundraiser. With us you're doing that fundraising that is so important and you're doubling that up with promotion and marketing."

The majority of film projects come from lesser known filmmakers, but recently some familiar names have popped up on Kickstarter, including Gary Hustwit's campaign for finishing funds for *Urbanized*. Hustwit raised about \$120,000 on the crowdfunding site.

Nick Broomfield also had a successful Kickstarter campaign to raise money for the theatrical distribution of his doc, *Sarah Palin: You Betcha!* At press time, Broomfield's campaign had pulled in \$31,120, ahead of his \$30,000 goal.

In appealing to the average Joe for help in funding a film, incentives are offered up, which can include signed DVDs or producer credits, depending on the amount contributed.

In Broomfield's campaign, backers received incentives such as "good will and gratitude sent from the indomitable spirit of Wasilla, Alaska," for a pledge of \$50 or more, and for

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Filmmaker Jennifer Fox turned to Kickstarter to close a funding gap

\$600 or more, one lucky donor received Broomfield's bullhorn that he uses in the film, autographed by the filmmaker.

Of course, Kickstarter isn't the only crowdfunding game in town, and many filmmakers have turned to other sites such as IndieGoGo and Rockethub for their projects. The unique thing about Kickstarter, as opposed to its crowdfunding competitors, is that the Kickstarter campaign will not receive the funding unless it achieves its fundraising goal. If the goal isn't met, the donors don't lose their money on a partly funded project.

"Of the over \$90 million dollars pledged on Kickstarter so far, 85% has gone to projects that have made their goal," Strickler says. "It really seems to bear out the strength of the 'all or nothing' idea."

Fox's campaign at press time had 518 backers that have donated a total of \$150,456. She maintains that her campaign worked – hers is the sixth most funded film on the site – because she took it very seriously and targeted the niche audience that her documentary appealed to, the spiritual community. *My Reincarnation* is a documentary about Tibetan Buddhist master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, passing on his spiritual knowledge to his Western-born son, Khyentse Yeshe.

"We wound up raising 300 percent of our goal. It was exhilarating. You're in the fast lane. Ninety days on the Web is three years in real time," she says.

Currently, the ability to post projects to Kickstarter is only available to U.S. residents with a U.S. bank account, requirements dictated by the payment system they use, Amazon Payments. However, international backers can donate.

Strickler says that there are plans to expand in the years ahead. "To be honest, having a specific market to get to focus on has been very good for us. Spreading us around the world is something that will take some effort and we want to make sure we do it right." ■■■

## ►► BEST PRACTICES

*business tips from the pros*

BY CHRIS PALMER AND SCOTT BASTEDO

# EIGHT THINGS YOU SHOULD BE DOING TO LAND A JOB (BUT PROBABLY ARE NOT)

Whether you are a freelance professional or are just starting out, when it comes to finding a new job in the current market, you probably have become frustrated, disillusioned, and just plain exhausted. Stay positive. You are not alone. The following eight ideas will expand your search methods and help you in landing a job.

**1) Get online, and do it now!** Skip the giant job search engines that yield thousands of listings and no results. Look for sites that cater to your industry.

**2) Narrow down your search.** "Any job will do" is not the right attitude to maintain while searching for your next career opportunity. Make a list of activities you would like to undertake at your next position. Job titles can be misleading. Be certain to read job descriptions carefully, comparing your activities list with the job duties. Beginning filmmakers may find they have multiple talents, from reading scripts to shooting B-roll. Use these skills to your advantage.

**3) Network relentlessly.** Schmoozing. Chit-chatting. Socializing. Whatever you want to call it, you need to network. There are plenty of associations in your area. Find two or three and attend gatherings with other industry professionals. Be professional, but try to have fun. Image counts. If you look like someone that would be easy to get along with at work, you just may find a job. Don't forget social networking sites. Search for individuals that have the job you want, and find out what they did to get them. You can get the scoop on your dream job and polish your networking skills.

**4) Research, research, research.** Find out everything you can about the company to which you are applying. Not only will you be able to match your skills with their needs in your cover letter and resumé, but also you will find out if the company is a good fit for you.

**5) Be fresh, innovative, and enthusiastic in your cover letter.** A dull cover letter is just as likely to be dismissed as one sent by a candidate lacking in talent. You want to appear enthusiastic about your potential future job. Stay professional, but set yourself apart from the rest of the herd. What assets do you have that benefit the company in ways

in which it hasn't considered? Perhaps you have started a side business making furniture or you've coached a softball team. Think of several ways your hobbies contribute to your job skills, especially those that demonstrate leadership.

**6) Be prepared for your interview and stay prepared.** Preparation is key for any job interview. Practice your interview with a friend or significant other beforehand, making sure you are ready for anything. Be sure to read "Best Practices: Acing a Job Interview" (<http://realscreen.com/2011/03/01/best-practices-accing-a-job-interview/>).

**7) Dress for success.** The old adage is still relevant, but don't think that means you need to wear a \$1,200 suit to your interview. The environment should dictate what you wear. Wearing a suit to a grunge band audition can be just as imprudent as wearing jeans and a t-shirt to an interview for a law clerk position. Ask during your phone interview what style of attire is appropriate for the office and dress one step up. Appear serious, but not pretentious.

**8) Show your passion during the interview and stay positive.** Keep in mind the reasons you want to work for the company, and state them with enthusiasm. A well-placed line regarding the company's last major breakthrough shows you care without appearing desperate. You want to show that you have a passion for the work and for the company and not just a yearning for a paycheck.

By the same token, it is crucial not to denigrate previous employers. No one wants to hire a disloyal person. If you left your previous job under bad terms, try to put a positive spin on the situation. After your interview, send a note thanking the hiring manager. Keep it polite, but acknowledge that you want the job and highlight the reasons you would be a good fit.

*Chris Palmer is the director of American University's Center for Environmental Filmmaking and author of the Sierra Club book "Shooting in the Wild: An Insider's Account of Making Movies in the Animal Kingdom." Scott Bastedo is a writer, filmmaker, and MFA candidate at American University.* ■■■

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As MIPCOM prepares to shine the spotlight on Russia during this year's market and conference with its "Focus on Russia" program, Phillip Luff, who has spent the last year overseeing Discovery Networks International's Russian businesses, tells *realscreen* about the challenges and opportunities of working in the region.

BY ADAM BENZINE

# FROM RUSSIA WITH LUUFF

Winston Churchill once famously described Russia as "a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma." And for years in the TV industry, that notion held true for many a Western producer or network trying to gain a foothold behind what was known as the "Iron Curtain."

Increasingly, however, the territory is becoming more and more accessible, with a rise in the number of Western networks, producers and distributors looking to work with the Eurasian giant. At MIPCOM this year, the focus will turn to the world's largest country, as delegates from the region arrive in Cannes for networking and deal-making.

One company which has increasingly focused on the region is Discovery Networks International, which over the last year has employed Phillip Luff to oversee its Russian operations.

Luff has spent the last year serving as acting country manager for Northeast Europe and Southeast Europe, and in July this year was promoted to VP and country manager for emerging business, with Vlad Tudose joining the firm as country manager for Southeastern Europe and Romania.

In addition to his new role, Luff still remains acting country manager for Northeast Europe, and is actively involved in the firm's Russian affairs.

As an Australian native with experience predominately in Australasia and the UK, Luff says one

of the first things to surprise him in the job was the scale of Russia's TV industry. "The size of the market in terms of population, and the size of the country in terms of geographical expanse, is enormous," he explains. "With so many operators there, it's critical to be set up in a way that you can actually manage things and devote the time to your clients properly."

"We've got clients across the expanse of Russia, and because there are nine different time zones, that can prove a challenge for us administratively."

Among the platform partners Discovery has in the region are Comstar, which is part of the Mobile TeleSystems group, and NTV Plus, which belongs to the Gazprom-Media group. Discovery first launched on the latter firm's DTH platform in the late 1990s.

"The challenge is to work your way through the whole industry and develop relationships with everyone to get distribution," says Luff, "down to the little, local cable company which is operating in a town and servicing the local needs."

One challenge Luff identifies in the region is the amount of everyday bureaucracy and red-tape that companies face. "The amount of regulation around licensing means our team spends a lot of time just doing the administrative work required to run a business," he says.

"For example, each channel needs to have its own company and its own license, and each channel

license needs to cover each of the regions in which you're operating. So as we launch with new operators, we have to add those particular regions onto the license. The paperwork is significant."

Still, there are opportunities for those willing to put in the hours. According to figures supplied by MIPCOM, some RUB128.8 billion (US\$4.3 billion) was spent on TV advertising in Russia last year, with cable revenues in excess of €723 million (US\$1.01 billion).

"There is so much potential — it is definitely a growth market," says Luff. "There is definitely a lot of demand for our products, and with the digitization of the cable networks there, the existence of the DTH platforms, and the increasing growth of IPTV and of web TV, there is a huge opportunity for us with our multiple channels."

In terms of content, Discovery has so far made only tentative footsteps towards local programming, most notably with a Russian version of makeover format *Daughters vs. Mothers*, which aired on TLC in the region earlier this year.

The majority of programming still comes from Discovery's Western feeds, although Luff says that the shows chosen tend to have universal appeal.

"It's not just about entertainment; it's also about learning something, which obviously fits really well with our brand. And as we often say, a shark is a shark, whether it's in Africa or Russia." ■



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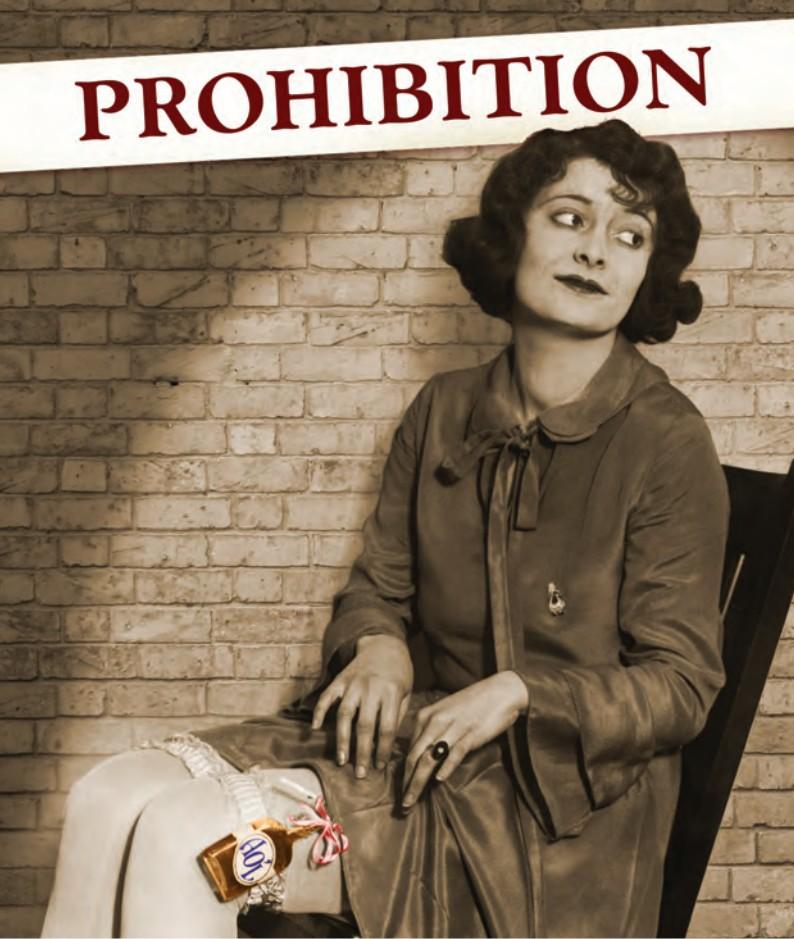
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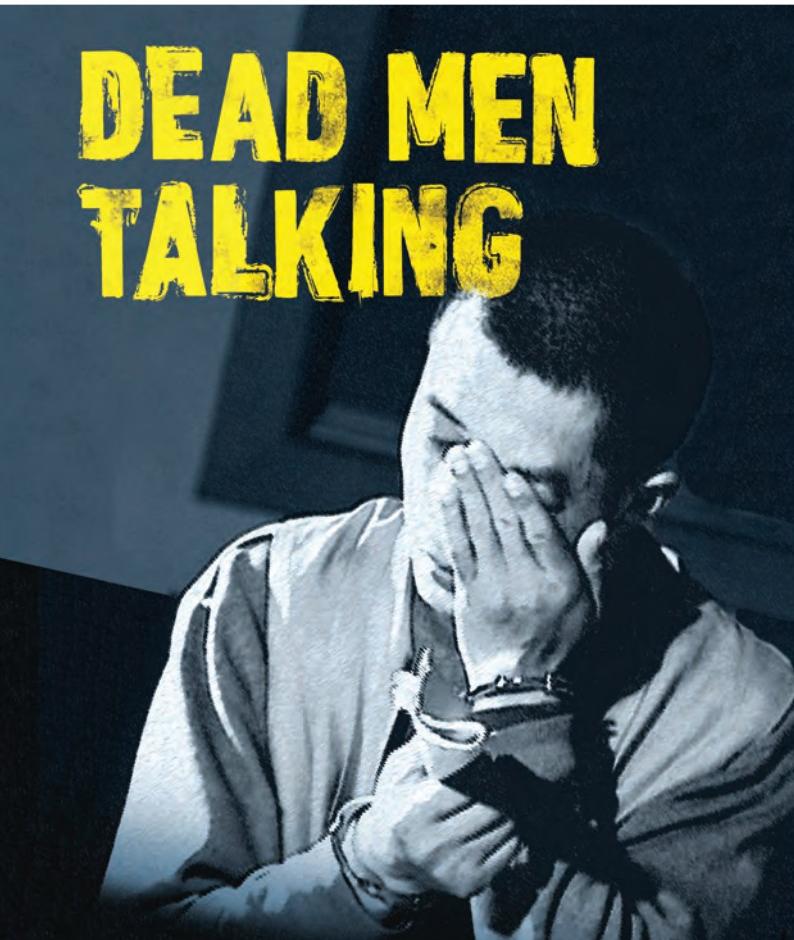


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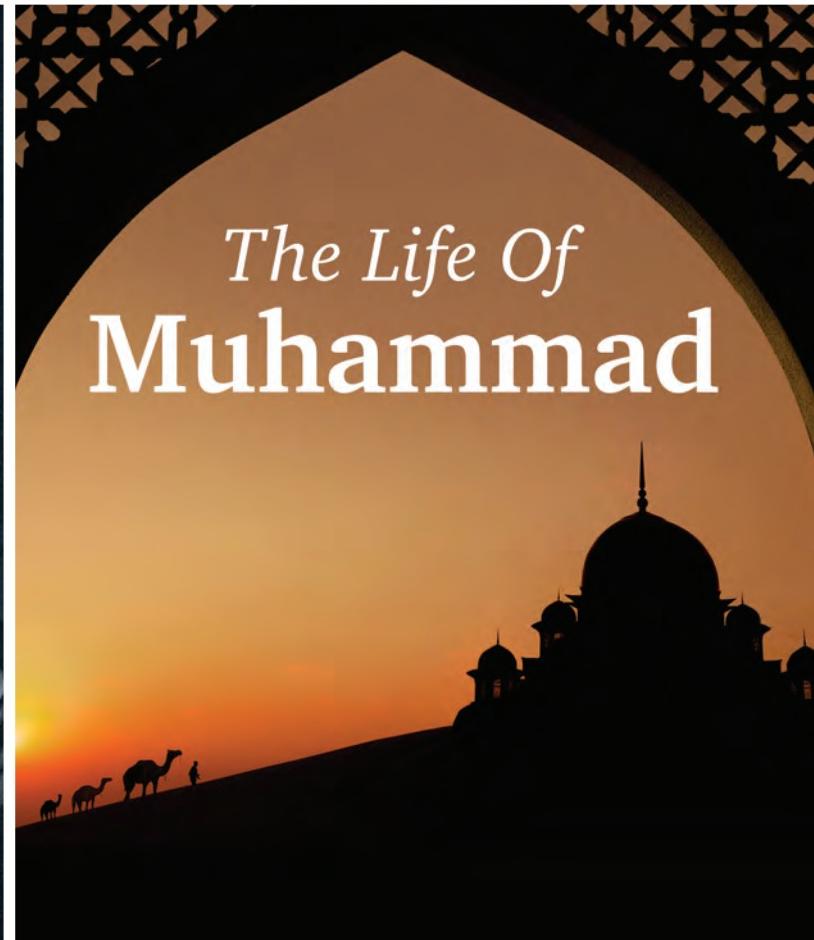


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# DEAD MEN TALKING



# *The Life Of Muhammad*



BY KELLY ANDERSON

Discovery Channel's newest landmark event series, *Curiosity*, not only asks some of life's biggest questions, such as 'How does life begin?' – it also strives to provide answers.

# SATISFYING “CURIOSITY”

**D**iscovery Channel's long-awaited *Curiosity* initiative is a multi-pronged, mighty ambitious affair. It incorporates a five-year-long series of 60 original documentaries, a heavy online presence, and a wide range of celebrity hosts, including Maggie Gyllenhaal, Robin Williams, Morgan Spurlock and Eli Roth.

The grand idea for *Curiosity* came all the way from the top, via the founder and chairman of Discovery Communications, John Hendricks. Simon Andreeae, senior executive producer for the series, and a senior VP of development and production for Discovery, is one of the key figures tasked with evolving an idea hatched from Hendricks to a five-year, multi-platform project, which fittingly kicked off in August with Stephen Hawking posing the question, "Did God create the universe?"

"Curiosity is John's favorite word," says Andreeae. "It's what's been behind all human progress and, in a sense, what defines us as a species. Three or four years ago, he had the idea of using it as the title for a series which would wrestle with some of the largest questions we as a species face and, in doing so, to tickle, enliven, spark and satisfy this profound human instinct."

Andreeae says the first step in making

*Avatar* star Michelle Rodriguez hosts the Atlas Media Corp-produced special *Alien Invasion: Are We Ready?*

Hendricks' vision a reality was to assemble a team to brainstorm potential topics, and to zero in on an approach.

"We knew that if the series was to sustain over at least 60 episodes as planned, then it needed to be very broad – and we also wanted it to embody the very finest production values, to please the eye as well as feed the mind. Eventually, as a guide, we decided to use the phrase 'eye candy meets mind candy' to help guide our commissioning and production approach," he explains.

The Discovery team divided human curiosity into three main categories: curiosity about ourselves, with shows on medicine, psychology and genetics; curiosity about the world, with specials focusing on history, geology and archeology; and curiosity about our universe, with shows tackling physics, astrobiology, space and philosophy.

Once the categories were laid out, the team went to producers with particular titles, approaches and ideas for hosts within each grouping, to ensure a balance of different points of view, says Andreeae.

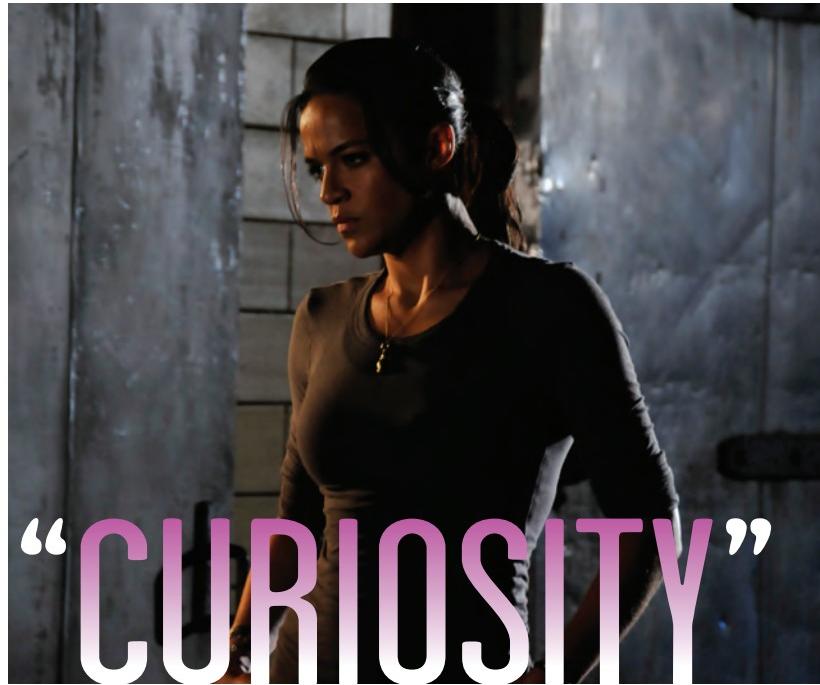
Much like ESPN's *30 for 30* doc series, to which an array of filmmakers contributed, *Curiosity* is using a number of production

companies, including Base Productions, Left/Right, Gurney Productions, Atlas Media Corp, and more. Some producers came to the network with a great idea, big-name talent, or a unique approach. Some prodcos offered up all three components.

Gurney Productions executive producer Scott Gurney was one of the producers who approached Discovery with a number of ideas. Gurney's one-hour special, *Life on Mike*, airs on October 23 and looks at the bacteria living on *Dirty Jobs*' host Mike Rowe, going into microscopic detail to showcase micro-monsters like forehead spiders which, apparently, 50% of the population have.

"We thought it would be a pretty cool concept to take one of Discovery's hosts who is known for undertaking some of the dirtiest jobs in the world and put all the dirt on him, to make it about him, versus about the other people he visits," he says. After some discussion, Rowe came on board to undergo endoscopes and more, in the name of satisfying curiosity.

Atlas Media Corp founder Bruce David Klein found himself in a different situation. He was already at work on a special for Discovery when *Curiosity* was starting to come together,





024 Stephen Hawking hosted the *Curiosity* premiere special

and he wound up tweaking the show a bit to make it fit the bill.

"It became clear in the early days of *Curiosity* that the way the creative was developing with *Alien Invasion: Are We Ready*, it would fit really well with the *Curiosity* brand – this idea of combining super smart provocative ideas with very commercial eye candy," he says.

The doc's premise is to depict a simulated alien attack through scientific theories of how such an event would play out if it happened. "We dived into answering questions such as how would they get here, what kind of weapons would they have, [and] could we and how would we fight back," says Klein.

Being involved in the project has also provided Klein with the opportunity to satiate his own curiosity about aliens.

"Who isn't curious about aliens?" he asks. "Who has not, on a summer night looking up at the stars, wondered what's out there, who's out there, and are they coming for us?"

Once producers were in place, big name hosts were needed, with a preference for individuals with a deep interest or close

association with a topic, says Andraeae.

Thus, an eclectic collection of well-known names are on board. Besides Stephen Hawking, actor Maggie Gyllenhaal has examined female sexuality in *Why Is Sex Fun?*, comedian and actor Robin Williams explores the effects of marijuana and cocaine in *How Do Drugs Work?*, and musician Will.I.Am focuses on robotics and artificial intelligence in *Will Robots Take Over?* For *Alien Invasion*, Avatar's Michelle Rodriguez served as host.

Andraeae says that having a celebrity host attached to every episode brings "personality, charisma, continuity, and buzz."

Andraeae, along with Alan Eyres as executive producer, worked closely with the producers of the *Curiosity* projects, even more so when the topic was going to be controversial, or in instances where the storytelling technique was more experimental.

One example of the more controversial programs is Left/Right's *How Evil Are You?*, in which *Hostel* director Eli Roth marks the 50th anniversary of the Stanley Milgram Obedience experiments – the social psychology

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experiments where test subjects believed they were giving out electric shocks – by replicating the experiment for today's world.

"We've collaborated closely on every detail, from planning Roth's own genetic tests – showing whether he has the 'evil gene' – through the protocols and subjects for the experiment itself," explains Andreeae.

Despite the fact that there will be 60 episodes of *Curiosity* spanning five years, there isn't a unifying look or feel tying together the films. For Discovery, it is more important that the unique angle and storytelling trope for each film be the most captivating and entertaining for audiences.

*Curiosity* also has an appropriately ambitious web component, including video interviews with experts, segments from the shows, articles related to the episodes and blogs. Visitors to Curiosity.com can ask almost any question and find answers and points of view from leading experts from around the world.

Beyond the web and the docs, Andreeae says that Discovery Retreats are in the works, where individuals can spend days with like-



Maggie Gyllenhaal asks viewers *Why Is Sex Fun?*

minded individuals and experts on particular topics or interests.

The five-year plan for *Curiosity* going forward hasn't been set in stone just yet, but season two is in the works, with Discovery currently shortlisting subjects and approaches.

Andreeae says Discovery views the project as "a long-term, 360 degree cultural enhancement brand for America and, we hope, the world.

"It's great to have a cohesive destination for producers to pitch their best and brightest 'specials,' and to signal to the audience that there's a dedicated time, space and network on which to enjoy them," he adds. ■

025

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# DRY DAYS

It was dubbed the 'Great Experiment' in the 1920s, and in 2011, it should make for great television, with Ken Burns and Lynn Novick tackling the topic of Prohibition for their latest PBS multi-part doc special.

BY KELLY ANDERSON

**K**en Burns and Lynn Novick's upcoming documentary series for PBS goes beyond the glamour of the flappers, Model Ts and gangsters of America in the 1920s to venture deep inside the country-wide ban of alcohol in *Prohibition*.

The three-part, five and a half-hour series, premiering on PBS on October 2, sees the director/producer partners delving into the reasons and politics behind Prohibition, the movement and the mandate, as well as how everyday Americans dealt with the outlawing of alcohol. The series was produced by Florentine Films and WETA Washington, DC. The international distribution arm of PBS will be selling the documentary series globally.

As Burns tells it, the idea for the project came six years ago, directly from old friend and frequent collaborator Daniel Okrent, who was in the process of writing his book, *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*.

"He said, 'I know what your next film is,' and I said, 'I do too, I've got three in the works,'" Burns recalls. "He told me about his book and the more we talked about it, we

decided to squeeze it in and do it.

"Voila, we benefited from his research and he benefited from ours," he remarks. "It was kind of a parallel construction."

Burns and Okrent shared research with each other, and over a time span of about three and a half years, Burns and collaborator Novick assembled a panel of advisors to help sift through the massive amount of material they'd amassed from the Library of Congress, public libraries, universities and museums. They also solicited people who lived during Prohibition via newspaper ads, to hear their stories of what life was like during that era, and to see their home movies and photos.

"We've all heard of the gangsters, Al Capone and the speakeasies. That's the Cliff's Notes version," says Novick.

"This is a film about single-issue political campaigns that metastasize with horrible unintended consequences, the demonization of recent immigrants to the country and, as always, the demonization of African-Americans," says Burns.

Novick says the series explores a range of

topics, from the 19th century temperance movement which included the Anti-Saloon League, to the eventual repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1933, as well as what everyday life was like in the Twenties, which "wasn't showing up on the front pages of newspapers."

As seen in the series, home movies from the period show people having parties and drinking away, and sometimes pretending to be drunk. The filmmakers also restored a 1921 documentary from legendary director Frank Capra that they found in the Library of Congress, which details the visit of an Italian naval ship crew to the port of San Francisco. They're greeted by the Italian-American community with a big banquet, where everybody's drinking wine.

"You could see that in the immigrant communities, Prohibition was not being obeyed, and that's exactly who it was targeted at," says Novick.

Burns says that compiling the amount of material for the five and a half-hour documentary was like stumbling into "a

This *Chicago Tribune* file photo catches a glimpse through a speakeasy peephole



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**Bye bye, booze** [Photo: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division]

blizzard of facts you didn't know," including one curious piece of data – the country that had banned the sale and manufacture of alcohol was also the largest importer of cocktail shakers in the world.

That blizzard of information, coupled with the incredible content unearthed by Burns and Novick, is framed in the series with narration from actor Peter Coyote and a chorus of actors' voices, including Tom Hanks, Paul Giamatti, Oliver Platt, Samuel L. Jackson and Patricia Clarkson, who read diaries, journals, love letters and newspaper accounts from the period to give life to the past. Jazz great Wynton Marsalis provides the music.

The debut of the documentary is no doubt going to prompt comparisons to the present, with the Prohibitionists mirroring the modern-day Tea Party, but both Novick and Burns are quick to stress that they aren't making political statements in the film.

"Good history always gives real agency to human existence and in the case of prohibition, you're stunned by how much it mirrors or prefigures our own time," says Burns. "One doesn't as a filmmaker put arrows and neon signs saying, 'Look, it's kind of

like the Tea Party,' or 'This is kind of like the NRA.' You don't need to do that. If you treat your audience intelligently, they'll respond intelligently and forge whatever connections they want to make."



"Certainly you see echoes of the past," says Novick of parallels with today's political climate, most notably in the demonization of immigrants and an increasing intolerance of multiculturalism.

"You see an exploitation of fears and

**“ We've all heard about the gangsters and speakeasies. That's the Cliff's Notes version. ”**

people's anxieties today and I think you see an incredibly sophisticated manipulation of the political system back then," she says.

While many viewers might also draw a link between the banning of alcohol in the 1920s to the fight to legalize marijuana today, Novick says there are deeper political issues at play. Because of the larger context, exploring human nature and what it means when governments impose rules and morality on a country, she believes that *Prohibition* has resonance for international territories.

As for the documentary's launch, Burns sees the success of HBO's 1920s drama *Boardwalk Empire* as an interesting coincidence.

"It's so funny, because we began before that show was a gleam in anyone's eye and now they've had their first season and are starting their second season and I've terrifically enjoyed it," he says.

"However the gods are operating, we've once again coincided with the zeitgeist. I felt that with *Baseball*, I felt it with *The Civil War*, I felt it with *Jazz*. You work and labor for years in the obscurity of the editing room and you come out and realize people are actually interested in this subject." ■

FROM THE PRODUCERS OF



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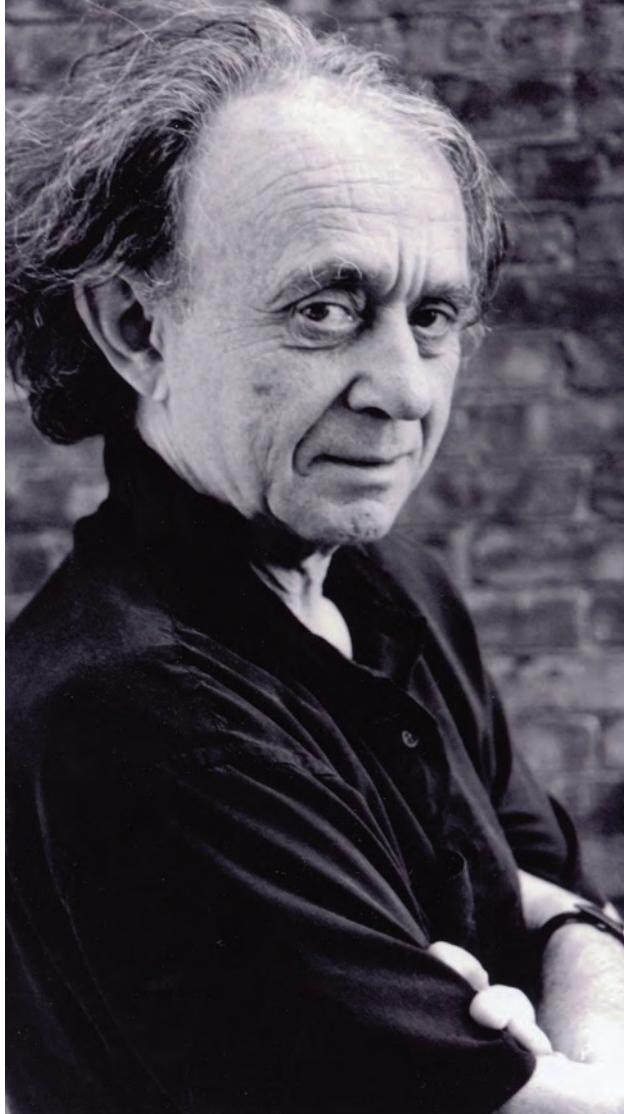
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**EBS**

# WISEMAN RIDES AGAIN

From his first directorial effort, 1967's *Titicut Follies*, to his most recent film, *Crazy Horse*, Frederick Wiseman's vérité approach to doc-making remains uniquely singular. While at the Toronto International Film Festival to promote his latest effort, the 81-year-old spoke to *realscreen* about the creative and financial challenges of filmmaking.

BY ADAM BENZINE



This summer saw the leading film festivals in Venice and Toronto playing host to the European and North American premieres of Frederick Wiseman's latest vérité effort, *Crazy Horse*.

The film is the 81-year-old director's 40th documentary in a 44-year career, and sees him capturing the rehearsals and performances for a new show taking place at the titular Parisian establishment, which has billed itself as offering "the best nude dancing show in the world" since 1951.

The film marks the fourth in a loose tetralogy of docs looking at the specific physical uses of the human body, alongside *Ballet*, *La Danse: The Paris Opera Ballet* and *Boxing Gym*.

Looking to the future, Wiseman has shot and is editing an as-yet-untitled documentary about the American university UC Berkeley for PBS, which he says should be ready "in about a year." The film will cap a trilogy of films looking at educational institutions, following 1968's *High School* and 1994's *High School II*.

Frederick Wiseman, whose next doc will look at U.S. university UC Berkeley (Photo: Gretje Ferguson)

***Crazy Horse* marks your third film looking specifically at French institutions, alongside *La Danse* and *La Comédie-Française ou L'amour Joué*. What drew you to move to France?**

I haven't exactly moved there, but I like to spend a lot of time there. I was a student in Paris in the 1950s, and I liked living there. I didn't go back for a long time – I started to go back a lot in the late 1980s, and then made *La Comédie-Française* in 1995, and then, since 2000, I've been there at least half the year every year. And for *La Danse*, I was there for about 14 months straight.

**Is Paris a sort of muse for you?**

[Laughs] I don't know that Paris is the muse, but I like it there, for all the obvious reasons.

**How did the staff at the establishment react when you approached them with the idea of making a documentary?**

Well, like most of the films it was extremely easy to get permission. The dancers and the administration and technical people were

extremely receptive to the idea. There were no political problems during the shooting of any significance, as there usually aren't. People cooperated and there was nothing I couldn't shoot.

**In terms of structuring the film, the first half of *Crazy Horse* leans very heavily on captured performance, whereas the second half features more behind-the-scenes footage...**

I didn't want to do a chronology of someone coming on the first day and then casting and rehearsals, and ending up with the show. First of all, the show has been going on for 60 years and I wanted to, in the early part of the movie, give an idea of what a finished act looked like, so that comparisons could be made about what the final product was when compared to a rehearsal.

**The documentary was predominantly funded by French nets Canal+ and Planète, as opposed to PBS – which has backed many of your past projects.**

Yes, and another French subsidiary, Fonds

de Soutien. It's not the kind of movie that one could expect to play on American television. Think of the Puritanism – not just PBS and American television, but think of the national furor a glimpse of Janet Jackson's breast caused at the Super Bowl several years ago. Now imagine the Crazy Horse... no, I think it will be on cable.

**In terms of funding, is it getting more difficult to get TV backing?**

Yes, in my experience. There are more people that want to make movies, and there's less money around. A lot of people assume I get money very easily, but it's the most difficult part of the job, and the moment you take for granted that you're going to get the money, that's when you should stop making movies. I don't like doing it, but I have to deal with the reality that it's a slog, and unless I'm willing to do that, I should stop.

**This is the first movie that you've shot on HD, correct?**

Yes, *La Danse* was shot on Super 16 but edited digitally, but this was the first one that was a complete electronic production. It's good, but I think film looks better. This is a lot cheaper; you can shoot for an hour on HD for about \$40, whereas an hour of film – by the time you buy the film, process it and make a work print – it'd be about \$1,100. That's a considerable difference.

I think the quality's quite good. Maybe I'm just being mean-spirited because I've worked on film and edited film for so many years. I like it better. But it's over; I doubt I'll ever make another movie using film.

**“A lot of people assume I get money very easily but it's the most difficult part of the job.”**

**You've predominantly self-distributed and self-released your docs through your own Zipporah Films...**

I have, with the exception of when I've worked in France and needed to get a French



Wiseman says that for *Crazy Horse*, his vérité look at the Parisian nude dance hall, "there was nothing I couldn't shoot."

coproducer in order to qualify for the French subsidy, but other than that I've always been on my own.

**Why is that?**

Well, in the beginning, I got screwed so badly by distributors that I figured I had nothing to lose... But it's something that's worked out over the years because I own my movies 100%.

DVD, or a buck and a half, I get a lot more, because there aren't three middle-men between me and the consumer. I don't have to sell as many to make a decent profit.

**In that respect you are adopting an independent business model more often associated with a younger generation or first time filmmakers...**

Yes. It has been an amazing learning experience for me about the power of the Internet.

People pay by PayPal, and all I need is to box up the DVDs and mail them out; the cost of doing all that is minimal. And I didn't even have to advertise all that much. Once the word started getting out by bloggers, the orders started coming in.

I'm not [of] the Internet generation, but I'm glad to see it work. And now I'm going to try and get them out on VoD, and probably we'll find a way of doing that ourselves too.

It's ridiculous to pay somebody 30% or 40% for something you can do yourself, particularly if it has some value and the cost of doing it isn't that great. ■

My movies were late getting out on DVD in part because I was busy, and in part because nobody made me a decent offer. The offers I got were insulting, they were so small. So, rather than getting 75¢ for a

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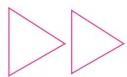
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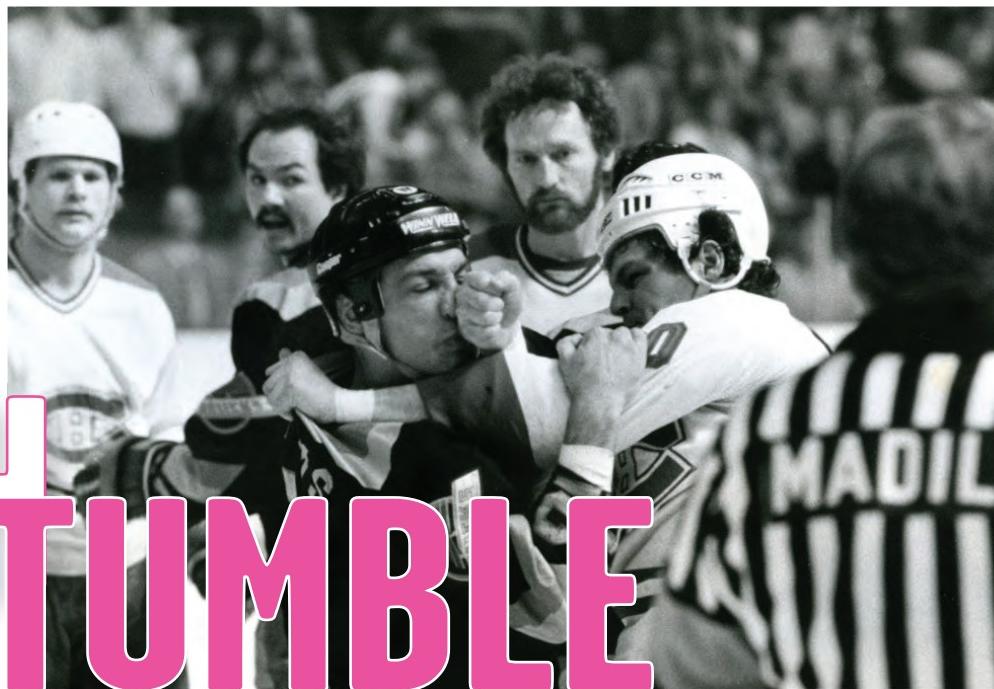


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*The Last Gladiators* looks at the world of NHL enforcers



# ROUGH AND TUMBLE

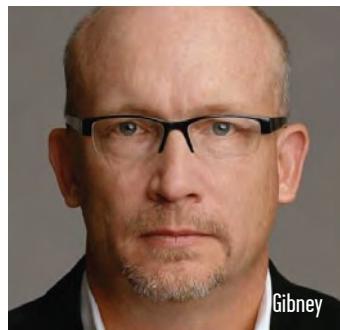
BY ADAM BENZINE

While on the promo trail for three — yes, three — documentaries, Oscar-winning director Alex Gibney found time to talk to *realscreen* about his latest, *The Last Gladiators*, which sees him exploring the psychology of the NHL's tough guys.

The September world premiere of Alex Gibney's *The Last Gladiators* capped a remarkable double hat-trick for the Oscar-winning documentarian: the second consecutive year that three of his docs had premiered at major festivals.

The launch of *Gladiators* at the Toronto International Film Festival followed the premiere of baseball doc *Catching Hell* at Tribeca in April, and *Magic Trip* at Sundance in January. That comes after 2010 saw the launches of *Casino Jack and the United States of Money*, *My Trip to Al-Qaeda* and *Client 9: The Rise and Fall of Eliot Spitzer*, as well as the collabo-doc *Freakonomics*, on which Gibney was one of six co-directors.

The trick to balancing so many different projects, Gibney tells *realscreen*, is to surround oneself with a savvy cutting room crew. "I stand on the shoulders of very talented editors, who day in and day out are putting the film together," he explains. "The editors are the unsung heroes of documentaries. "And in the case of Alison Ellwood on *Magic*



*Trip*, because it was purely an edited project, she deserved a co-director credit, which she rightly got."

Part of the thinking behind Gibney's multiple-project approach is that it allows him and his team at Jigsaw Productions to keep ideas active if the process slows down or hits a snag.

"Sometimes if you're doing other projects at the same time, you can afford to say, 'Okay, we'll wait and see if we can get that person [for an interview], and then we'll resume.' If you're only doing one project it's a hard thing to do because if it stalls, what do you do?"

*The Last Gladiators* came about after he was approached by a group of ice hockey investors ("some of them were NHL team owners

or part owners"), who were looking to make a film celebrating the oft-overlooked role of the enforcer — the team member tasked with physically intimidating the opposition.

"I was interested because I played a little bit of hockey in college, and I knew a guy who did go on and play in the pros briefly, and he

was faced with the Faustian bargain a lot of the fighters are faced with, which is: you're not Wayne Gretzky, you're not Sidney Crosby. If you want to hang around, you better learn how to fight," Gibney says.

"That's a very poignant thing, because what they really wanted was to play pro hockey, but their way in was not through their blades, but through their fists."

The doc focuses on one particular enforcer, Chris "Knuckles" Nilan, and his battle with painkillers after retiring from the game. "Chris was not the most famous enforcer, but he was the best storyteller," says Gibney. "Because he had been a fighter, he had been in a lot of physical pain and started to take drugs to dull that pain, and got hooked. He speaks very honestly and candidly about trying to come back from that addiction." It is a film with particular relevance following this past year's off season, in which three NHL enforcers died in the span of four months.

Gibney says it was Nilan's mental battle that captured his imagination, as much as the physical. "I'm interested in human psychology, and although sports is often about physical accomplishment, it's really a lot about psychological accomplishment too." ■



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# ROCK DOCS TAKE CENTER STAGE AT TIFF

Cameron Crowe, Davis Guggenheim, Albert Maysles and Jonathan Demme were all touting new projects at the Toronto International Film Festival this year, featuring such A-list rockers as Pearl Jam, U2, Paul McCartney and Neil Young, respectively. *Realscreen* provides a wrap-up of how docs rocked Toronto in September.

BY ADAM BENZINE

A quartet of rock docs captured the spotlight at September's Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), with new efforts from directors such as Cameron Crowe and Jonathan Demme, and appearances from artists including U2, Pearl Jam and Neil Young.

The festival kicked off with Davis Guggenheim's *From the Sky Down*, which examined the making of U2's acclaimed 1991 album *Achtung Baby!* and marked the first time a doc had opened TIFF in its 36-year history.

The premiere kick-started a run of music films that included Albert Maysle's Paul McCartney doc *The Love We Make*, Cameron Crowe's *Pearl Jam Twenty* and Jonathan Demme's *Neil Young Journeys* — the latter being the director's third film on Young.

At the press conferences accompanying the premieres, the conversation often turned to music documentaries, with artists and directors alike lining up to reference the films that had influenced them.



Crowe

For U2 frontman Bono, the pick of the bunch was Martin Scorsese's 1978 film *The Last Waltz*, which captures the last concert performed by the rock group The Band.

"I've seen it 10 times," the singer said. "It's a real insight into a band; it was them at their peak, and then they were gone."

For U2 guitarist The Edge, meanwhile, Pennebaker's 1967 vérité effort featuring Bob Dylan took the prize. "*Dont Look Back* is such an incredible piece of work because it captures a moment in [Dylan's] career where he decided to turn his back on the folk scene, which he had been the king of," he said. "He effectively walked away from one fiefdom to go and seek his fortune elsewhere. And that's, for us, a great lesson."

Bono also paid tribute to Demme, picking out *Stop Making Sense*, the filmmaker's 1984 documentary on new wave stars Talking Heads, for special praise. "It had a huge impact on us," said Bono. "Jonathan Demme's an incredible filmmaker."

For his part, Guggenheim called *Stop Making Sense* "a perfect movie," while also drawing attention to *New York Doll*, Greg Whiteley's "obscure rock documentary" from 2005. "It's so beautiful and heartbreakingly at the same time," Guggenheim offered.

Elsewhere, director Cameron Crowe (*Almost Famous*) followed up the April Tribeca Film Festival premiere of *The Union* — his documentary on musicians Elton John and Leon Russell — with another music doc premiere at TIFF. *Pearl Jam Twenty* offers a two-decade retrospective on the Seattle rock group, and at a gathering to discuss the film, Crowe cited Martin Scorsese's comprehensive rock doc *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*, describing it as his "guiding light" while making the film.

"I just love the way that Scorsese — as a fan, as a musicologist and as a director — examines the roots and shows how the music is born," said Crowe. "I felt so satisfied and inspired, I wanted to listen to more Bob Dylan — it felt like the Bob Dylan experience."

"If we can make a movie that lets you feel the way a Pearl Jam concert or record lets you feel, then we're in good shape." ■

U2 vocalist Bono appears at TIFF to promote Davis Guggenheim's doc on the band, *From the Sky Down* (photo courtesy of Crucial Pictures)

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NBC's upcoming *Fashion Star*, set to debut in early 2012, is aiming to be a fashion competition show like no other. With the involvement of three major fashion retailers and a commitment to creating a buzz-worthy fashion brand through the show itself, it's staking out its own unique space on the genre's crowded catwalk.

BY BARRY WALSH

# FASHION FORWARD

**W**hen NBC first announced late last year that it would be bringing the John de Mol format *The Voice* to America, some TV critics and industry players alike could barely contain their cynicism. Even with the announcement of Mark Burnett as executive producer, some pundits couldn't fathom that another singing competition would work on American television. After all, many were saying *American Idol*'s days were numbered following the exit of Simon Cowell; the loss of Ellen DeGeneres, on the other hand, wasn't seen as that fatal of a blow.

Fast forward several months, and *Idol* experienced a rebirth with the addition of Steven Tyler and Jennifer Lopez as judges, and *The Voice* emerged as the unscripted hit of 2011, thanks to both its central conceit – focusing on the voices of the talent via "blind" auditions – and the addition of celebrity mentors, including Christina Aguilera and Maroon 5's Adam Levine. What was seen by many as an exercise doomed to fail wound up resuscitating an unscripted television genre.

Elle Macpherson: über-model and host of NBC's upcoming *Fashion Star*

With the upcoming launch of *Fashion Star*, a new fashion competition slated to air early in 2012, lightning might strike twice for NBC. It will have an iconic host in supermodel Elle Macpherson, and it will also have the talents of Magical Elves, the production team behind the original version of one of the biggest shows in the fashion competition genre, *Project Runway*. It will also, like *The Voice*, bring three mentors on board to aid the young designers facing off against each other.

Importantly, it will also integrate a branded element that will set the show apart from others in its field. Not only have three of the top fashion retailers in America signed up to take part in a pronounced way, the show itself could even facilitate the launching of a fashion brand. All of these factors combined might serve to liven up the crowded catwalk that is fashion-oriented reality television.

The original idea for *Fashion Star* was brought to NBC by former NBC programming topper and Electus founder Ben Silverman, and Rick Ringbakk, one of the principals of 5x5 Media.

As Paul Telegdy, the recently promoted president of alternative and late night programming for NBC recalls, the two men came to him with a big name – Macpherson – and an even bigger idea.

"The core premise involved this very ambitious idea that clothes you saw air on a TV show would be available in stores the following day," says Telegdy. "That is a very big idea – think of the logistics involved in manufacturing, distribution and also the complicated retail partnerships that [would have to be] integrated into the show."

Having Macpherson involved was a definite plus. "Her work as a model and icon in fashion is part of the chapter heading of much of her life, but she's evolved into a multi-million dollar fashion brand with her own line of lingerie and swimwear," explains Telegdy.

The concept evolved from self-contained episodes to a serialized fashion competition. Telegdy was convinced that this was an idea big enough to lure the Elves back into the genre following several seasons of *Runway*, and

**“What we’re trying to do is create a new vocabulary of what fashion on television looks like.”**

*Fashion Star* will draw on the glitz and glam of awards shows and variety programs for its look

upon bringing Elves founders Jane Lipsitz and Dan Cutforth to the table with Silverman and Ringbakk, the show developed further.

*Fashion Star* will see designers compete with each other to get their clothes into the stores of three major retail chains. Buyers from the chains act as the judges, and the winning designs will indeed be available in the chains' stores the next day. The ultimate winner will get the chance to launch his or her line in all three chains.

In July, NBC announced the retail partners taking part, and they are formidable indeed. Macy's, H&M and Saks Fifth Avenue have all signed on, with buyers from each chain appearing on the program and actually spending money on the merchandise created by the designers.

"There will be people who will emerge as having a particularly good week depending on the amount of money spent at the stores," explains Telegdy. "We got up to six figures in individual orders very rapidly."

Mike Duffy, MD of branded content at Electus, says the presence of the brands ups the competition aspect and therefore the entertainment value of the show. After all, it's not just the designers competing against each other, but the retail brands are also facing off to get the most bang for their buying bucks.

"Ben talks about [*Fashion Star*] as a show that actually doesn't exist without brand integration, and I think viewers are going to look at that,

and they're not going to think that it's heavy handed," Duffy says.

"They're going to see that it actually gives great insight into how brands think, and it also offers a significant part of the entertainment agenda. All of the brands associated with *Fashion Star* look amazing in the show, because it's not a stretch in incorporating them."

Telegdy points out that Maybelline and



Unilever hair care product Suave are also brand partners for the show. "Those also provide us with millions of point-of-sale activation points as we go into launching the show," he explains.

Like *The Voice*, Telegdy says NBC plans to fully use the show's interactive potential through social media. And there, the presence of both the brands and the high-profile

mentors – Jessica Simpson, John Varvatos and Nicole Richie – can only spur buzz.

"It makes a difference to have people who are willing participants in these sorts of things," admits Telegdy. "It's great to bring in Jessica Simpson who has a daily conversation with seven and a half million people via whatever forms of social media."

To further separate *Fashion Star* from the fashion reality flock, producers will also incorporate elements of variety shows, including music, to amp up the entertainment value for audiences.

"What we're trying to do is create a new vocabulary of what fashion on television looks like," says Telegdy. "So we draw on the spectacle of awards shows and big variety shows to engage the audience in something that looks like more than a big catwalk with lots of people sitting around it."

We'll have to wait until the new year to see how – and if – the mix works, and if what Telegdy calls "the latticework of conversations" involved in bringing the retailers to the program will give it both credibility and cachet among fashion-conscious viewers and critics alike. Either way, Telegdy says for those designers taking part, it has been a winning combination thus far.

"I don't think I've known of the ability to buy the clothes of any previous winner of a fashion [reality] show," he says. "People are being given life-changing forays into the fashion market." ■



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# MAKING IT WORK

As more client marketers and broadcasters turn to branded content to meet their marketing and programming needs, more production companies are devoting resources to dedicated branded content departments and projects. Here, three production company execs working in that space share their thoughts on what works, what doesn't and where the medium is heading.

## MIKE DUFFY

MD, branded content, *Electus*

With Electus' ambitious brand-backed competition series *Fashion Star* set to premiere on NBC in February next year, seasoned reality exec Mike Duffy couldn't have chosen a more interesting time to join the Ben Silverman-led transmedia indie.

Duffy left LA-based producer-distributor Zodiak USA, where he had most recently served as executive VP and head of development, earlier this year after four years with the firm, taking up the new role of MD of branded content at Electus, as first revealed by *realscreen*.

Since then, he has been getting to grips with the markedly different world of branded entertainment. "I was hired because I bring a lot of TV experience, mostly in the non-scripted space," Duffy explains.

"My role here is to bring some of the relationships that I have in the TV industry to the table, but also to speak the language of the producers and of the TV executives, in order to have a more efficient relationship with the brands."

Duffy admits that there is a learning curve in terms of understanding the different ways in which brands work, compared with traditional production companies. "From the get-go I've noticed that the brands have great research," he says.

"They know who their consumers are, they're very targeted in what the messages are that they're trying to get out, and their research tends to influence the content in a much bigger way than the research of the



television networks, who tend to make decisions more based on gut [instinct], and what they like.

"So there's a real opportunity to understand the demographics of our viewership, and specifically what they love and don't love."

In addition to flagship series *Fashion Star* (see page 39), which is being made in coproduction with Magical Elves (see page 47) and 5x5 Media, and features talent in the form of host Elle Macpherson and mentor Jessica Simpson, other brand-backed projects on the Electus slate include *Ready, Set, Dance!*, an original branded entertainment title for web giant Yahoo!, sponsored by State Farm; and *Pedro & Maria*, an interactive scripted telenovela for MTV, starring America Ferrera (*Ugly Betty*).

Despite having a busy slate, Duffy — who is primarily focused on development in his new role — says the overall involvement of more people in the creative cycle does "slow down the process a bit."

"It adds a layer of development in the middle that I'm not used to, but ultimately I think that it's to the benefit of the product and the shows that we are creating, as we take these projects out in the market, to have a big brand associated that says, 'Hey, we already support this — in some cases we'll come in and help co-finance the project or commit to an ad spend around the show.' That's really compelling, especially for broadcasters."

Looking at future development, the company — which in September named former Shine International president Chris Grant as its new CEO — has a number of projects in the reality and non-fiction space emerging on the horizon. "One of the things we've discussed is bringing back TGIF, the old Friday night programming block, which was a great co-viewing experience for parents and their kids," Duffy explains.

"Elsewhere, we've got a project we're developing in the jobs space, and we've got a project that we're developing around great citizens; kind of feel-good, non-scripted shows. At my previous company, we re-sold *Secret Millionaire* to ABC after it didn't work on Fox, and that's a show that falls into that feel-good, wish-fulfillment category, just like *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*.

"But the show itself has an entertainment agenda at its heart," he adds, "and that's something that really matters to us as storytellers — that, first and foremost, we've always got a really compelling story to tell. Ultimately our job is to entertain viewers, and Ben really gets that everything needs to be creative-led first — everything else comes in secondary."

**Adam Benzine**

## PAUL DAY

VP branded content & digital media, *Cineflix*

Paul Day operates out of Cineflix's London offices, and with the company producing brand-funded content for both the UK and North American markets, he gets to see first-hand the different approaches brands and television networks employ in bringing such content to the small screen.

"In North America, we've been asked by broadcasters about whether we have any brand relationships, or we'll have shows or ideas and the broadcasters will ask if there's any way we can bring a brand into it," he says, by way of comparison. "That's been happening in the UK and is now happening in North America a bit more. It's something that's relatively recent — in the past it was more about negotiating the ways to bring a brand in. Now we're being positively asked for it."

In the UK market, the company recently produced *Family Food Fight with Flora* for the Unilever spread,



which goes by the brand name of Becel in North America. The competitive cooking show aired on Channel 5, "with a message of healthy eating running all the way through it," says Day.

"That was something that we did through an agency — Mindshare, part of WPP — that came from an initial brief that emerged out of a marketing campaign and we created brand new content for," he adds. "For

me, that's the Holy Grail — creating something from scratch for a brand that also fits in with the needs of a broadcaster and other distribution platforms."

Projects on the way are still somewhat shrouded in secrecy, but include a property series in the UK that will combine real estate agents with interior designers and use brand input from both vocations. For Canada, Cineflix is teaming up with a "well-known restaurant chain" on a competition format focused on fresh food.

Day says that briefs are now coming from myriad sources — media agencies, creative agencies, digital shops, and PR firms — and more players are looking to get into the brand-funded content game. The deals may not be huge, he says, "but they'll get bigger." And Day maintains that factual programming is well placed to take advantage of brands looking to find the right stories to align themselves with.

"Generally, a brand wants to tell a story and there's no better way of doing that than finding a similar story that can run alongside it," says Day. "Having experience in telling those stories of real people in the real world, and linking those stories to brand messages, can create something very powerful." BW

## TOM DUNLAP EP, RSA Films

MARY LISIO SVP non-fiction  
television & branded entertainment,  
*Scott Free Productions*

Scott Free Productions, the shingle from filmmaking brothers Tony and Ridley Scott, has been actively ramping up its non-fiction branded content. In mid-2010 Scott Free launched an online reality show for Budweiser based around the World Cup in South Africa, *The Bud House*, and also produced a short film series, *The Character Project*, for USA Network, which featured three docs, including one from RJ Cutler (*The September Issue*).

Scott Free, which works closely with Ridley Scott's commercial prodco RSA Films, is currently developing a project for an as-yet-unnamed car brand, with director Amir Bar-Lev. The director of the acclaimed doc *The Tillman Story* will helm a feature film, while Scott Free will also produce music videos and online content. While other elements of the project, like interstitials, will directly link the auto maker to the content, RSA



exec producer Tom Dunlap says the doc will be "pure."

"That is one of the keys to the work that we do in the branded entertainment space, especially the documentary space," he says. "We want to really give the brand a home and weave their marketing message into the fabric of the storytelling. The content that we explore has to be appropriate for the brand, not shilling it," he says.

This methodology will also be applied to a new project with Activision, the makers of the massively popular video game franchise *Call of Duty*. Online portal Call of Duty Elite TV will feature Scott Free's series *Friday Night Fights*, executive produced by Cutler. The eight-part short series will pit teams, which



may include celebrities, of *Call of Duty* gamers against one another, in a studio environment with host and former professional wrestler Stacy Keibler.

"We're finding that brands are really interested especially in the non-fiction space. It's quick to market, fairly inexpensive to produce and they can put their product messaging in the hands of real people and that resonates," he adds.

"We make sure we're all on the same page about the upside of how we integrate those products into our content," says Scott Free's Lisio. "Sometimes it's almost invisible. Sometimes it's very prevalent, like in *Bud House*, [because] it made sense and was organic for the content of the show."

"One thing we tell brands is you have to act like a network or a distributor," explains Dunlap. "You have to treat it like Fox handles *Glee* or *American Idol*. You have to promote it properly and treat it like an entertainment property all the way through."

**Kelly Anderson** ■

# FUTURE FACTUAL



**UK prodco Twofour Productions and Channel 4 collaborated with UK energy supplier E.ON to create Future Family, a five-part, brand-funded exploration of what the “home of the future” will look like. Here, Twofour’s Andrew Mackenzie takes *realscreen* behind the scenes.**

BY ADAM BENZINE

This spring UK terrestrial Channel 4 (C4) made its first move into brand-funded specialist factual, giving UK indie Twofour Productions a green light to produce *Future Family*, a five-part series partly funded by energy company E.ON.

For Twofour, the job marked the first of several major brand-backed commissions this year, including an order in August for *Bumps, Babies and Beyond*, an online series hosted by musician Myleene Klass for web portal Yahoo!.

Andrew Mackenzie, who quit his job as C4's head of factual entertainment in February 2010 to become TwoFour's group creative director, says he has noticed in a short space of time how proclivities towards branded entertainment have changed in the UK market.

“Things are moving quite quickly, and in the past couple of years broadcasters' attitudes have changed,” Mackenzie says. “I came from a broadcaster about 18 months ago and I could feel the change happen over that period; they have become a lot less ‘sniffy’ about ad-funded programs.

“They’re no longer at the periphery of the schedule, and that’s something that [chief

creative officer] Jay Hunt and [CEO] David Abraham at C4 are not shying away from; they’re seeing that you can get credible programs and they can be ad-funded or partly ad-funded, as this one is.”

In *Future Family*, which airs later this year, a typical 1980s British home will be refitted with the latest technology – some of which is years away from being made available to the general public – in a bid to create the ultimate environmentally friendly “home of the future.”

The project was put out to tender by GroupM Entertainment on behalf of E.ON, to which Twofour submitted a proposal. “The broad brief was about green housing and how in E.ON’s world, making houses more efficient is a key message,” Mackenzie recalls.

“That, as any commissioner or program-maker in the factual space will tell you, is quite a dry field, and quite a difficult one to turn into primetime telly.”

Twofour’s initial proposal was to create the world’s most futuristic house from the ground up, which E.ON “sort of bought into,” before instead suggesting to the prodco that they take an existing pre-war British house and transform that.

While the collaborative process proved smooth on this occasion, he acknowledges that this won’t always be the case. “When I pitch programs to broadcasters, it’s quite a simple relationship,” he offers. “They say yes or no, and then they tell me how much they’re willing to pay for it if it’s a yes.”

“This, however, isn’t that simple. The more people that are involved in editorial decisions, the worst a program can be, because you can end up with a really soggy, oversold pizza of a program, and it can be a nightmare.”

Thankfully, Mackenzie says that wasn’t the case here. In addition to pleasing E.ON, there was also the question of the broadcaster. Arriving with brand money on the table did not mean carte blanche creatively.

“The head of specialist factual [at C4], Ralph Lee, said: ‘I’m only interested if I’d pay for this myself,’ which is a slightly perverse way of thinking about it,” Mackenzie recalls. “But actually, he’s got his cake and he can eat it.”

Despite the tiptoeing required, Mackenzie has high hopes for the show, and says it could even work as a format further down the line. “Potentially – who knows,” he says. “Let’s have a hit first series first.” ■

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BY KEVIN RITCHIE

# magic makers

In 2001, Dan Cutforth and Jane Lipsitz created a production company and launched a game show, *The Runner*, that barely got off the ground. Ten years later, the Elves' empire is behind the *Top Chef* franchise and other reality hits, and has moved into the feature world with a vengeance thanks to one Justin Bieber. Here, *realscreen* talks to the dynamic duo to find out how they make their magic.

**T**here is no shortage of producers in the reality game, but Magical Elves, the Hollywood-based prodco founded by Dan Cutforth and Jane Lipsitz in 2001, stand apart thanks to their skillful casting, flair for storytelling and an unrelenting focus on quality across their series.

"They don't compromise very much," says Shari Levine, SVP of production for Bravo, home to numerous Elves-produced series including five seasons of the game-changing fashion competition *Project Runway* and the *Top Chef* franchise. "You typically have to make a show that the network wants but, more than most, they manage to get the show that they want to make made. They really manage to stay true to whatever their vision is in a way that others don't. They're different."

Different, yet very much the same as each

other, say the principals. Indeed, with the two engaged in shoots and only able to be interviewed via email, they talk to *realscreen* as a team, only occasionally attributing answers to one or the other.

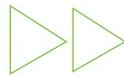
"We were always in sync creatively and personally from the beginning," they say. "We had to find a way to share equal creative weight with no clear line of authority. We still find we're very much in sync. We often finish each other's sentences in development meetings, which tends to freak out our team."

## ELVISH ORIGINS

The producers met in the late Nineties when Cutforth was a freelance producer trying to sell his first show. Lipsitz, then a development executive at VH1, didn't like his show ideas, but asked him to produce a pilot for a late night talk show. The pilot didn't take off but during production they came up with the idea for *Bands on the Run*, a 2001 reality show about unsigned bands competing for a cash prize. When the eight-week shoot ended they realized they had chemistry and formed



Jane Lipsitz (left) and Dan Cutforth. "We were always in sync from the beginning."



Magical Elves.

"That cemented our relationship and when *Bands on the Run* was over we realized that we really liked working together and decided to start a company," recalls Cutforth. "Of course we had no clue what starting a production company would actually entail."

Their first project was an adventure series for ABC called *The Runner*, an elaborate game show about contestants chasing the titular fugitive character. Aside from the legal and logistical nightmares that threatened to derail the shoot, production coincided with the 9/11 terror attacks. Suddenly a show about safe houses and fugitive takedowns didn't seem like such a hot idea.

On the upside, *The Runner* was sold to ABC by Matt Damon and Ben Affleck's production company Live Planet, which asked the Elves to produce its filmmaker competition series, *Project Greenlight*, for HBO and later, Bravo.

By that point, the Elves had developed a style, even if they're reluctant to admit it. "It's hard to say what our signature style is, but there are elements that most of our shows share which perhaps [creates] a signature," they say. "In some ways we developed our style on *Bands on the Run* – it was about artists pursuing their dreams and we used a lot of backstory in the episodes. We've always liked to show our characters in the context of their life stories and life experiences because it's just interesting to us, and that continues across all of our shows."

**“We can tell immediately whether or not someone is an ‘Elf’ and it’s nothing to do with their height.”**

"We also like well-rounded characters and that came through in *Bands on the Run* as well," they add. "There were heroes and villains but the heroes were sometimes villainous and the villains were sometimes heroic."

Fans of the Elves' output single out the team's attention to casting as integral to their success. Many of their show ideas require highly-skilled cast members competing for a



The cast of Bravo's most recent aired season of *Top Chef*

high stakes prize.

"It's reality television about people that are actually really good at something," says John Miller, SVP of programming at WE tv.

In the beginning they shared responsibilities equally, but as the company has grown to an average of 100 staffers, they divide up the work and take different levels of responsibility depending on the show. As for what makes a

person a potential "Elf," Lipsitz and Cutforth say the company culture requires a specific kind of employee.

"Elves are very hard working and creatively driven (sometimes to a fault)," they say. "A sense of humor is required and Elves are usually very kind. We can always tell immediately whether or not someone is an elf and it has nothing to do with their height."

## HITTING THE RUNWAY

When Bravo greenlit *Project Runway* in 2004, the fashion competition genre was in its nascent form. Four years earlier the network had shifted its focus from performing arts to reality programming. Early on it scored a hit with *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, a show that would begin to shape the new brand.

After the Tyra Banks-hosted *America's Next Top Model*, which premiered the summer before, became a ratings hit for The CW, Miramax decided to produce a show about fashion designers that also incorporated models and planned to pitch it to Bravo. It approached Cutforth and Lipsitz.

"We weren't at all sure it would be a hit – quite the opposite," say the Elves. "But we weren't in a position to turn down work."

The producers visited Parson's School of Design in New York and met with faculty member Tim Gunn and students enrolled in the fashion program. Inspired by the energy of the aspiring designers and their instructor, Cutforth and Lipsitz decided to focus the show around the designers' creative process.

Bravo picked up the show and Magical Elves worked with Miramax and later The Weinstein Company to define the format, tweaking



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## MAGIC IN MOTION A MAGICAL ELVES TIMELINE

- 1999 - Dan Cutforth and Jane Lipsitz first meet at the offices of VH1 in New York. He's a freelance producer pitching a show; she's a development exec who's non-plussed by the idea.
- 2001 - Despite passing on Cutforth's original idea, the duo clicks and decides to work on a project together, *Bands on the Run*. The short-lived series spurs them into forming their own prodco, Magical Elves. That year, they work on *The Runner* for ABC.
- 2004 - The Elves team up with Bravo and Miramax for *Project Runway*, a fashion competition series focusing on the creative process of designers. They produce the series for five seasons, until it moves to Lifetime.
- 2006 - Bravo pitches the Elves on an idea about a food competition program and *Top Chef* is born. The show becomes a major international format and spawns assorted spin-offs, including *Top Chef Masters* and *Top Chef: Just Desserts*.
- 2008 - As the Elves wrap their involvement with *Project Runway*, they embark on a new relationship with NBCUniversal. The exclusive overall first-look deal includes scripted and unscripted projects as well as short-form and digital works, and covers the media company's broadcast and cable networks.
- 2010 - The Elves collaborate with Sarah Jessica Parker's production company on *Work of Art* for Bravo.
- 2011 - Paramount enlists the Elves to produce a tour documentary for teen heartthrob Justin Bieber. *Never Say Never* goes on to become the third highest-grossing documentary to date. Plans are announced for *Fashion Star*, an NBC series that will mark the Elves' return to the fashion competition sub-genre. The series, premiering in early 2012, is to be hosted by Aussie supermodel Elle Macpherson.

**Barry Walsh**



WE tv's *Braxton Family Values* is one of Magical Elves' latest unscripted series

it through the month-long shoot until it became *Project Runway*.

"You had challenges, but no blueprint," says Bravo's Levine of the series' early days. "Jane was on set for the shooting phase. I think she was sleeping in one of the production rooms most nights."

"It was all hands on deck and everybody holding on tight as they went through the ride," she recalls. "A hundred different things happened and she was there guiding everyone through it. I think she was violently ill by the end."

team, Bumim/Murray Productions, working with The Weinstein Company and Miramax.

The Elves were not part of that decision, which prompted a legal battle between the two networks, but they used the change to take more control over their shows. After five seasons of *Runway*, they decided to cut the cord. NBCUniversal, Bravo's parent, offered them a better deal structure through a first-look deal with more financial protection.

"It has worked out very well for us," they say. "We will always be proud of *Project*

**“ We've always liked to show our characters in the context of their life stories and experiences. ”**

*Project Runway* became a brand-defining show for Bravo, set a new standard for fashion competitions and earned the Hollywood-based shop a reputation as a top producer in reality TV. The show is now in its 11th season, albeit on a different network (Lifetime) and with a different production

*Runway*, but it forced us to really focus our energies on building a business."

Next year the Elves will return to the fashion world with *Fashion Star*, a new retail-focused designer competition for NBC hosted by Elle Macpherson and featuring celeb mentors Jessica Simpson, Nicole Richie

and John Varvatos (see page 39). This time, contestants must compete to impress a judging panel of buyers from Saks Fifth Avenue, H&M and Macy's.

"The clothes that are designed on the show and are bought by the stores will be available in those stores the next day, so that is a completely new development in fashion television," say the Elves. "The structure of the show is also completely different than most of our formats. It's more stage-based with a lot of spectacle."

## COOKING UP HITS

While they walked away from *Runway*, another series from the Elves has also proven to be an extremely durable franchise for Bravo. *Top Chef*, now shooting its ninth season, has spawned spin-offs (*Top Chef Masters*, *Top Chef: Just Desserts*) and is must-see viewing for foodies and reality lovers alike. But as with *Runway*, it took time to get the dish just right.

"The biggest challenge [was] that you can't taste the food [as a viewer]," say the Elves about the show's first season. "However, we found that with the right amount of explanation from the chefs and reaction from the judges, you could get a feel for it."

"For the most part it wasn't that hard," they add, regarding the process of finding an audience and a groove for the show. "Chefs are compelling characters, people love food and you eat with the eyes first, so as long as the visuals were appetizing and there was real drama in the competition, it worked."

Magical Elves branched out further into the observational documentary genre earlier this year with *Braxton Family Values* for WE tv, a show about R&B singer Toni Braxton and her sisters. Most networks had passed on the show when the Elves brought it to WE tv last year, having heard Miller was looking for programming about dynamic families. This fall the series will go to its second season with 19 more episodes.

"The show has shown their versatility and skill at storytelling and casting," says Miller. "There's a balance of getting us a three-dimensional portrait of each of their characters, but also making sure there's enough relationship between the cast in the context of what's going in the macro story to keep things interesting. Putting together a



*Top Chef* host Padma Lakshmi (center) flanked by head judge Tom Colicchio and judge Gail Simmons

good reality show is every bit as difficult as putting together a scripted show."

The Elves came full circle this year, returning to the world of the touring musician they covered in *Bands on the Run* with *Never Say Never*, a US\$13 million-budgeted feature concert doc about Justin Bieber that grossed \$73 million domestically.

A fan of *Bands on the Run*, Paramount Pictures president Adam Goodman approached Cutforth and Lipsitz to produce the film in only a few weeks.

"There was no pre-production time, we just had to go," say the Elves about the whirlwind schedule. "The Paramount people kept remarking on the crunch, saying, 'Movies are never made this fast.' We kept reminding them

that television is not made that fast either."

The company has since created a feature doc division. And while the team does point out that the Bieber film is the third-highest grossing documentary of all time, it's also quick to joke that its earlier doc, 2006's *Air Guitar Nation*, might indeed be "the 300th highest grossing doc of all time." The move into features is just one area of expansion they're focusing on for the future.

"We had planned to do this before the Bieber movie happened because we have always tried to expand our horizons," they say. "We have some scripted shows we're working on, several digital projects, and we have a couple of documentaries in the works. We don't have a particular filter, we just want to tell."

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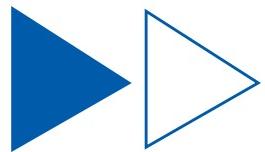
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# MIPCOM PICKS 2011



As we at *realscreen* pack up our suitcases and prepare for another few days of existing on a strict diet of rosé and espresso while gallivanting to and fro along the Croisette, we've also assembled our list for this year's MIPCOM Picks.

As in years past, we issued a call for submissions, asking for non-fiction projects making their way to the market for the first time, ranging from factual entertainment to documentaries geared towards political and social issues. Projects aplenty came through, making the selection process a tough one. Congratulations to the teams behind our Picks for this year, and an extra pat on the back (and a pass to the 2012 Realscreen Summit) to our Best in Show. And now, the Picks...



## BOMBAY BEACH

**Partners:** Directed by Alma Har'el for Bombay Beach Productions; distributed by ro\*co international, Focus Features (theatrical, U.S.) and Dogwoof (theatrical, UK).

**Length:** 80 minutes | **Premiered:** Berlinale, 2011

**Rights available:** All rights, outside of U.S., UK and Canada

*Bombay Beach* is the first feature effort from Israeli-born Har'el, who had previously showcased her distinctive helming style via music videos for alt-folk act Beirut (who contribute to this film's soundtrack, along with one Bob Dylan). It was while filming a video for Beirut that she first stumbled upon Southern Bombay Beach, the community — a wide-ranging group of individuals and families gathered along the east shore of the Salton Sea in Southern California. The director was immediately transfixed by the characters there, and by the geography of the area — both surreal in their own ways.

The film has garnered both huge accolades, winning the prize for best documentary feature at Tribeca, and criticisms from some in the doc community, for staged, choreographed sequences that aim to illustrate other areas of the inhabitants' personalities that perhaps a more vérité approach wouldn't uncover. Regardless, the sumptuous imagery and engrossing stories of the film's "stars" make it a "can't miss" for doc fans and plain old movie buffs alike.

## LIGHTS, CAMERA, LIONS

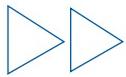
**Partners:** Nationwide Distributors, executive produced by Kevin Richardson; distributed by National Geographic Television International

**Length:** 52 minutes | **Wrapped:** August 2011

**Rights available:** All TV worldwide except South Africa

Kevin Richardson is known as "the lion whisperer," which one would figure is probably a bit more dangerous than Cesar Milan's job. And when he took on the role of lion wrangler for *White Lion*, a fictional film that would in the end take four years to complete, he probably had no idea of the obstacle course that lay before him and the rest of the crew. The lions — all indigenous to South Africa — weren't trained performers and in some cases, didn't take too well to direction. Throw in horrible weather and rising costs, and it would be safe to say that the production process was far from "purr-fect." This documentary traces the triumphs and travails behind the making of the feature, and provides a window into the often untamed world of wildlife shoots.





## DEFUSING HUMAN BOMBS

**Partners:** First Take Films, distributed by Scorpion TV (London)

**Length:** 52 minutes

**Wrapped:** July 2011

**Rights available:** Worldwide

The Sabaoon School in Pakistan teaches its students much more than reading, writing and arithmetic. The school, run by the Pakistani Army, uses psychology, the teachings of religious scholars, and other techniques to effectively deprogram young boys who have been exposed to years of Taliban indoctrination, during which they've experienced myriad abuses ranging from abduction to brainwashing. Filmed over a period of 18 months, this film showcases both the efforts to 'defuse' these young, ticking time bombs, as well as the hardships the school itself faces, with only a small number of the students having successfully re-integrated into society following their time with the Taliban.

## DECODING THE WORLD'S FIRST COMPUTER

**Partners:** Images First, distributed by Electric Sky

**Length:** 52 minutes | **Airing:** 2012

**Rights available:** Worldwide excluding Japan, France, Germany and Greece

In 1901, a group of divers near the island of Antikythera, off the Southern coast of Greece, found an ancient Roman shipwreck that uncovered many treasures, but the true value of one mysterious object — a lump of calcified stone that contained within it several gearwheels practically welded together by years under the sea — would be revealed by a 10-year effort by an international team of scientists. The 2,000-year-old object, no bigger than a modern laptop, is actually being regarded as the world's oldest computer, devised to predict solar eclipses and, according to recent findings, calculate the timing of the ancient Olympics. This program follows the efforts of scientists to uncover the mysteries of the Antikythera Mechanism, revealing surprising and awe-inspiring details of the object that continues to mystify.



## HOW TO START A REVOLUTION

**Partners:** The Big Indy in association with Lion Television, directed by Ruaridh Arrow, distributed by TVF International

**Length:** 52-minute and 80-minute versions

**Wrapped:** September 2011

**Rights available:** All rights for all territories, excluding TV in Australia

In 1993, political scientist Gene Sharp published an essay, *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, which he called "a conceptual framework for liberation" and originally published for the Burmese democratic movement. That handbook has since been translated into 31 languages and is available for purchase or as a free download from the Albert Einstein Institute. But beyond being a thought-provoking treatise on the challenges and ultimate virtues of conducting non-violent revolution to effect social change, it's also been hailed by many as a tool that has helped mobilize action against dictatorships in Serbia, Ukraine and Iran, as well as in Egypt and most recently, Syria. With its list of 198 non-violent weapons, ranging from the use of colors and symbols to "humorous skits and pranks" and "symbolic sounds," Sharp's tome has resonated worldwide, providing inspiration and ammunition for the oppressed. This film features exclusive interviews with the 83-year-old scholar, as well as many of the modern-day revolutionary leaders he's inspired.



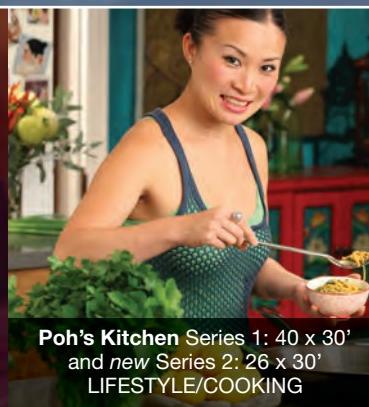
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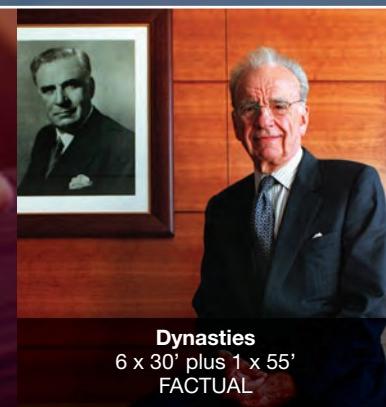
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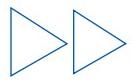


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## LUDO BITES AMERICA

**Partners:** Authentic Entertainment for the Sundance Channel, distributed by Passion Distribution

**Length:** 7 x 60 minutes | **Aired:** July 2011 (Sundance Channel)

**Rights available:** All TV, format, video/DVD, non-theatrical

Ludo Lefebvre is a five-star French chef who made his mark in the U.S. via such Los Angeles foodie hot spots as L'Orangerie and Bastide, and his own bistro Ludobites. In this Sundance Channel series, he's embarking on a culinary road trip with wife and business partner Krissy, setting up pop-up restaurants in local eateries across the U.S.

Ludo and Krissy make for charismatic characters, he being the tantrum-throwing, unpredictable creative type and she being the calm, cool and collected business head (and a former contestant on *The Apprentice* to boot). A tasty concoction for foodies who like a little reality with their foie gras.



## WEEKEND ARISTOCRATS

**Partners:** Landmark Films for Sky Atlantic, distributed by Passion Distribution

**Length:** 6 x 60 minutes

**Airing:** Sky Atlantic, TBD

**Rights available:** Contact Passion Distribution

We've heard of the expression "king for a day," but surely it must be intoxicating to be, say, a lord, laird or viscount for a weekend?

This observational doc series follows the outcomes as UK aristocrats in their endearingly eccentric glory open their estates to paying guests with a yearning to see how the other half lives. But those guests will have to abide by the rules, and keep in mind that these estates, and their lords, demand respect. "If you love this place... we love you," says one of the featured aristocrats, Sir Humphrey. "If you don't, bugger off."

## BAR RESCUE

**Partners:** 3 Ball Productions for Spike TV, distributed by Shine International

**Length:** 10 x 60 minutes | **Aired:** July 2011 (Spike in the U.S.)

**Rights available:** Worldwide for finished episodes and format

You know the sort of place — the neon sign proclaiming 'Open' doesn't beckon to customers as much as it fizzles and blinks intermittently; the beer taps, rather than issuing the nectar of the gods in a fine, forceful stream sputter and cough; and the bathrooms... the less said about them, the better. These are the unredeemable dives, the holes in the wall, the bars on the brink of closure.

Bar and nightclub owner Jon Taffer has seen more than his share of this sort of establishment, and it makes him mad. Thus, through *Bar Rescue*, he's on a mission to save some of these night spots from extinction, doing so with a brash manner that might make Gordon Ramsay blush. This program illuminates the human drama behind the innumerable challenges faced by the barkeep, and the indomitable spirit needed when selling spirits.





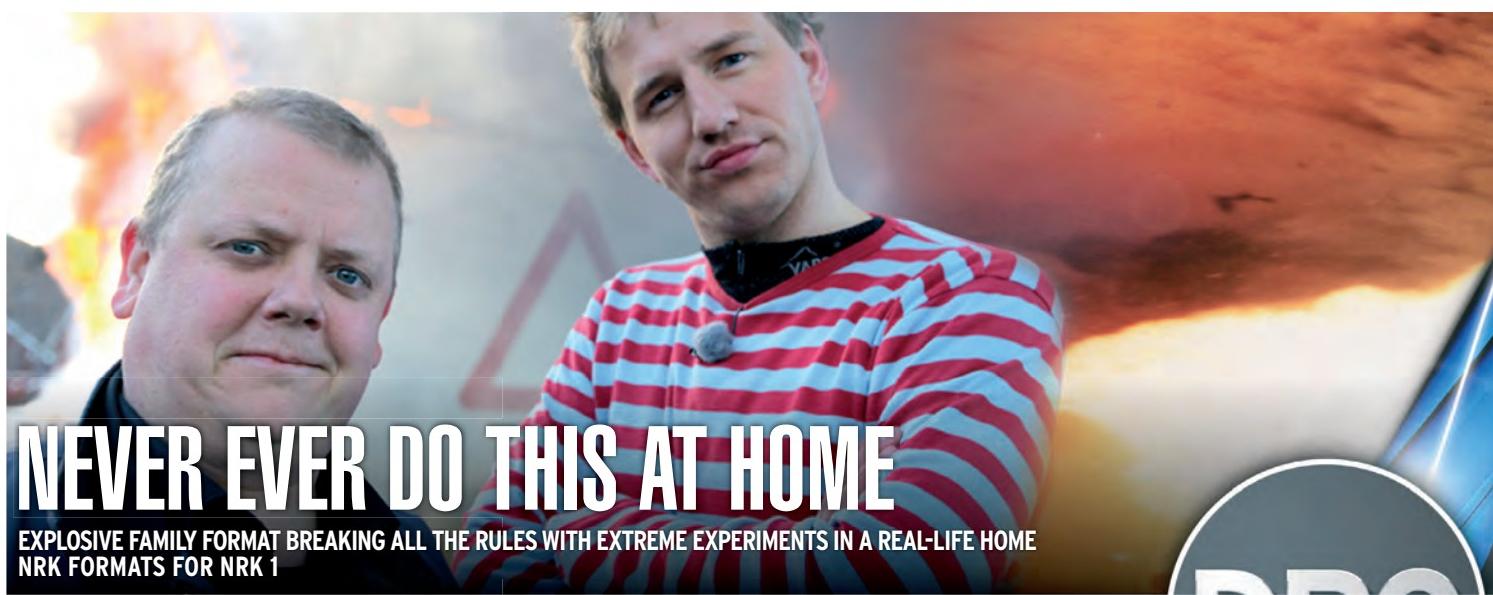
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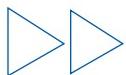


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## THE RENOVATORS

**Partners:** Shine Australia for Network Ten, distributed by Shine International

**Length:** 67 x 60 minutes (Australian stripped version), 12 x 60 minutes (format)

**Aired:** July 2011 (Network Ten, Australia) | **Rights available:** Worldwide, tape, format



This reality competition series from Australia gets to the “nuts and bolts” of what it takes to be a master renovator through assorted challenges held offsite and in the warehouse studio environment. Fifteen renovators face off against each other, hammers and tape measures in hand, and endeavor to use their home reno chops to revamp several properties in need of a face lift. The winning contestant is the renovator whose property fetches the most on the market. Produced by Shine Australia, the series has been renewed for a second season in its home territory, and its “*Extreme Home Makeover* meets *Top Chef*” conceit could click in other markets as well.

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## VIETNAM: LOST FILMS

**Partners:** Lou Reda Productions for History | **Length:** 3 x 2 hours

**Airing:** 2011 | **Rights available:** Worldwide

Lou Reda Productions, producers of 2009 MIPCOM Pick *WWII in HD* (or *WWII: Lost Films* internationally) is the team behind this archive-based exploration of the Vietnam War. As with its WWII doc special, *Vietnam: Lost Films* utilizes uncensored Vietnam War footage from private collections, museums, veterans’ organizations, the U.S. government and news organizations, restored in HD. Many of the clips were shot by soldiers in action, capturing a first-person glimpse into the horror and heroism that marked the conflict. Like its predecessor, *Vietnam: Lost Films* will also incorporate a narrative element. The experiences of 13 veterans will be brought to life via voiceovers from actors such as Edward Burns, Kevin Connolly, Jerry Ferrara, Adrian Grenier, Jennifer Love Hewitt, Zachary Levi and Blair Underwood. Michael C. Hall (*Dexter*) narrates.



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## QUIRKY

**Partners:** Sharp Entertainment for the Sundance Channel, distributed by Passion Distribution  
**Length:** 6 x 60 minutes | **Premiered:** August 2011 (Sundance Channel U.S.)  
**Rights available:** All TV, format, video/DVD, non-theatrical

In 2009, entrepreneur Ben Kaufman launched Quirky.com, a product development company that encourages average folks to submit ideas for gizmos that would make life easier by solving everyday problems. Each episode of the series follows the 24-year-old Quirky captain and his team as they pick two ideas out of the scores submitted to them online, in an effort to make the inventions pay off for everyone — the original inventor and the other members of the Quirky online community who've contributed input for the final product. *Quirky*, the series, shines the spotlight on everyday ingenuity.

## METAL EVOLUTION

**Partners:** Banger Films, distributed by Tricon Films & Television  
**Length:** 11 X 60 minutes  
**Airing:** VH1 (U.S.) and MuchMore (Canada), November 2011  
**Rights available:** Worldwide excluding U.S and Canada

Scot McFadyen and Sam Dunn, the dudes who founded Banger Films, know heavy metal, as can be seen (and heard) via their earlier productions, including 2005's *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey*, 2007's *Global Metal*, and last year's MIPCOM Pick *Rush: Beyond the Lighted Stage*. This year, the team is presenting a comprehensive series charting the evolution of the musical genre, tracing its flame-throwing, devil-horn salute roots to the flamboyant theatricality of Little Richard and Screamin' Jay

Hawkins, and beyond.

Using the "Heavy Metal Family Tree" (yes, such a thing exists) as his road map, Dunn travels the globe to explore metal's 40-year history. Guests range from erudite rock scholars to legends such as Alice Cooper (pictured), Iggy Pop, Iron Maiden's Bruce Dickinson and influential pioneers such as Arthur Brown.

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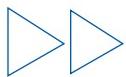
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## DEATH BEACH

**Partners:** Earth Touch and Smithsonian Networks U.S., distributed by Earth Touch

**Length:** 1 x 50 minutes

**Airing:** 2012

**Rights available:** Worldwide, excluding U.S. and Canada

Second Beach is a surfer's haven in Port Saint John's, South Africa. But the idyllic surroundings and near-perfect waves have been tainted by a series of shark attacks, with six people killed over the past three years. Each casualty was a young surfer from one of the region's local tribes. The townsfolk are at a loss to explain why the wave of attacks is happening now, with some theories pointing towards discarded bones from tribal sacrifices, and others focused on a nearby estuary which has been dubbed "a shark highway." This natural history special combines a gripping narrative with spectacular photography for a chilling tale of man vs. nature.



## STEPHEN FRY'S 100 GREATEST GADGETS

**Partners:** North One Television for Channel 4, distributed by All3Media

**Length:** 2 x 60 minutes | **Aired:** August 2011 (Channel 4, UK)

**Rights available:** Worldwide except UK

Admittedly, we'd probably watch any factual program featuring the wit and candor of Stephen Fry, even if it merely involved him reading the phone book aloud. Thankfully, this light-hearted but informational look at the world of gadgets has a bit more takeaway. Here, Fry reveals his personal list of the top 100 gadgets in recorded history, ranging from such modern items as the iPad and its smaller cousin the iPhone, to more humble doodads such as the apple peeler. Indeed, Fry's notion of what constitutes gadgetry is not limited to modern-day technological wizardry, and it may not be too much of a spoiler to reveal that his top gadget doesn't need an external power source. Interviews with assorted fellow gadget-heads and Fry's inimitable delivery help prevent the show from getting bogged down in geekdom, and Fry's choices will surely provoke discussion, perhaps via some gadget or other.



## REVENGE OF THE ELECTRIC CAR

**Partners:** Directed by Chris Paine for WestMidWest Productions, distributed by ro\*co international, Area23a (theatrical, U.S.)

**Length:** 1 x 60 minutes, 1 x 90 minutes

**Premiered:** April 2011 (Tribeca)

**Rights:** All rights outside of Canada and the U.S.

In his 2006 documentary, *Who Killed the Electric Car*, writer/director Chris Paine investigated the birth and death of electric car technology, and the roles assorted players, including the automotive and oil industries among others, played in its demise. Now, in 2011, Paine has returned, and so has the electric car. The new doc follows four different manufacturers, ranging from GM and Nissan to start-up Tesla Motors, as they attempt to revive the concept of the electric car while the world reels from recession. The film also re-introduces auto retrofitter Greg "Gadget" Abbott, who also appeared in the original film. The film's drama partly stems from the question of who will get to the finish line first... if ever.



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## DANCING WITH DICTATORS

**Partners:** Produced by Evershine; financed by Screen Australia, Screen NSW, Evershine; distributed by PBS International (worldwide) and Ronin Films (Australia and New Zealand)

**Length:** 1 x 57 minutes or 1 x 80 minutes HD

**Premiering:** October 2011 (PBS U.S.) | **Rights:** Worldwide

It's often said that for the best documentaries, the filmmakers never really know what's ahead of them when they set out to tell their stories. One would be inclined to think that such was the case for director Hugh Piper when he set up cameras in the offices of the *Myanmar Times*, Burma's leading national newspaper. Australian ex-pat Ross Dunkley (pictured), the paper's co-owner and editor, agrees to have a crew film the activity inside the *Times'* offices, ostensibly to shine a light on how journalism functions under a repressive regime. And the film certainly probes that subject matter, with sequences featuring long-suffering reporters and editors hacking away at stories by order of sensitive censors. But things take a turn for the strange when Dunkley is arrested on charges of assault — charges he continually denies — and put on trial.

## WILD COASTS

**Partners:** South Pictures International, distributed by All3Media

**Length:** 5 x 60 minutes | **Premiered:** August 2011 (New Zealand)

**Rights:** World rights except New Zealand

It's common television wisdom that talent can sell a show and its subject matter, and for presenter-led programming, it's essential to have someone in front of the camera who oozes not only charisma, but credibility. This five-part natural history series has such a presenter in Craig Potton (pictured), a celebrated landscape photographer and conservationist. In *Wild Coasts*, Potton (previously seen in *Rivers with Craig Potton*) travels across New Zealand's gorgeous, unpredictable coastline, taking viewers to awe-inspiring expanses and isolated nooks and crannies, and never failing to show his own sense of wonder over his surroundings. Impressive aerial and underwater photography, coupled with guests who range from scientists to "boaters" and Potton's taste for the subject matter add up to a winner.



## WILD ORPHANS

**Partners:** One Planet with France Télévisions, Planète, TV5 Québec Canada, HD Suisse, and support from IFAW, WWF and IUCN France; distributed by ZED

**Length:** 4 x 52 minutes

**Premiered:** February 2011 (France 2)

**Rights available:** Worldwide

Olivia Mokiejewski, French television presenter, journalist and ambassador for the International Fund for Animal Welfare, hosts this four-part series, in which she showcases the baby orphans of endangered species. She also investigates the root causes behind the endangerment of the species, ranging from deforestation and poaching, to climate change. Animal stars in the series include cheetahs in Namibia, and Tota, the Amazonian monkey. Spectacular cinematography, engrossing stories and a compassionate host make for solid family viewing, or a good four hours of television for the conservationist and natural history buff.



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## PROHIBITION

**Partners:** Florentine Films and WETA, distributed by PBS International

**Length:** 5 x 53 minutes

**Airing:** October 2011 (PBS)

**Rights available:** Worldwide

Prohibition, enacted in the United States from 1920 to 1933, has been referred to by some as "The Noble Experiment" and by others as a grand folly. As per the Eighteenth Amendment to the American Constitution, it banned the sale, manufacture and transportation of alcohol. It also served as the hottest of political hot potatoes, pitting the "dries" (those in favor of Prohibition, who were also vehemently opposed to the proliferation of saloons and the loose morals displayed within) against the "wets" (those who just wanted to have a drink, damn it). What may have started as a "noble" endeavor to prevent rampant alcohol abuse wound up magnifying the issue, resulting in an increase in liquor consumption amongst the young, and a ramping up of criminal behavior as neighborhood gangs transformed into national crime syndicates. Ken Burns and Lynn Novick distill (sorry, couldn't resist the pun) the Prohibition years into five captivating hours, using expert interviews and, of course, scads of painstakingly-sourced archival footage and photos.

## THE BIRTH OF SHOPPING

**Partners:** Essential Media and Entertainment, Telfrance for ARTE and SBS; distributed by ZED

**Length:** 1 x 52 minutes and 2 x 52 minutes

**Aired:** July 2011 (SBS One) | **Rights available:** Worldwide

Where, oh where, would we be without the department store? Be it Bloomingdales or Wal-Mart, the almighty shrine to consumerism is more than just a mere collection of goods, or so this well-crafted documentary posits. The rise of the department store certainly promoted the advent of consumer culture and, according to evidence presented here, it also propelled the emancipation of women. Combining lavishly rendered re-enactments and expert interviews with diary excerpts and poster art from the day, the doc provides a glimpse into the vision fostered by such retail legends as Rowland H. Macy and Harry Selfridge — a vision of empowerment and aspiration, accompanied by a soundtrack of clinking coins and ringing cash registers.



## TO BE HEARD

**Partners:** To Be Heard Productions, distributed by Cargo Film & Releasing

**Length:** 52 and 84 minute versions available

**Premiered:** Doc NYC 2010, airing on TV in 2012

**Rights available:** Worldwide, excluding U.S.

In this acclaimed documentary, three teens from the South Bronx — Anthony, Pearl and Karina — transform their lives as they discover creative expression through poetry. Shot over four years, the film follows the teens as they immerse themselves in a "radical poetry" class, dubbed "Power Writing" and taught by a trio of outsider teachers. While the class itself isn't part of a formal curriculum, it creates a lasting impact on the three teens, who each use what they learn to hone and nurture their own inner poets, and give words to the feelings and experiences they share. The motto shared by the teachers is indeed one that can be applicable for us all: "If you don't learn to write your own life story, someone else will write it for you."

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## GREAT FOOD TRUCK RACE

**Partners:** RelativityREAL for Scripps Networks

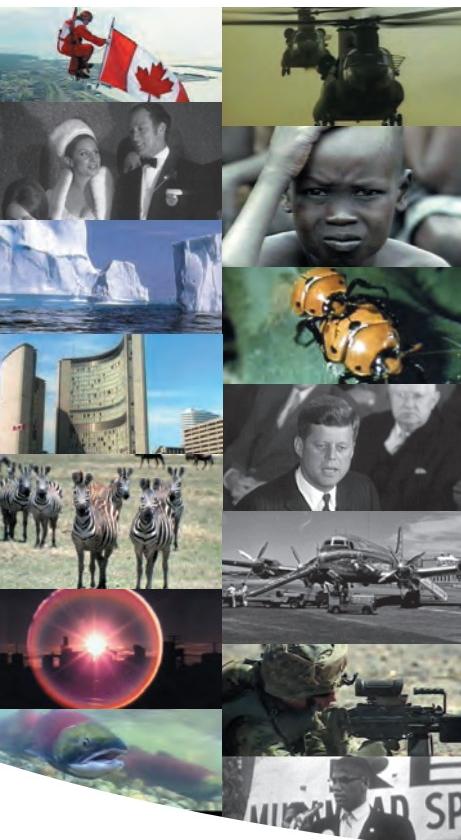
Interactive, distributed by Passion Distribution

**Length:** 7 x 60 minutes

**Aired:** August 2011 (Food Network)

**Rights available:** Television, video, ancillary, format

The food truck craze has taken North America by storm over the last couple of years, as while the steely grip of the recession has loosened somewhat, not everyone is keen to drop the credit card on the table for a night out at the local four-star resto. Specialty food trucks sell a wide variety of eats — from Thai cuisine to gourmet tacos — and their menus are becoming an integral, edible part of the urban landscape. This series pits several food trucks against each other in a cross-country contest to see which truck will sell the most grub. Along the way the teams are given Truck Stop challenges, and, as with any road trip, the unpredictable can, and does, occur.



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## AMERICA'S WORST MOM

**Partners:** Cineflix Productions, produced in association with Slice (Canada) and TLC International, distributed by Cineflix Rights

**Length:** 13 x 60 minutes | **Airing:** January 2012

**Rights available:** U.S., France and Germany

In 2008, Lenore Skenazy allowed her nine-year-old son to take the New York City subway by himself. That might have escaped the eyes of the world unnoticed, if Skenazy, a columnist for the *New York Sun*, hadn't written about why she did it a week later. Following that column, she and son Izzy found themselves in the middle of a media firestorm. Now, as the founder of parenting blog Free Range Kids, Skenazy uses her experiences to offer advice to parents who don't want to give in to the "helicopter parenting" so prevalent in North America. In this series, she comes into contact with such overprotective parents, and attempts to intervene before the children become irrevocably scarred. Would you take advice from America's worst mom? Perhaps, after watching this, you might. ■



067



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## MELISSA GIDDENS

**ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER**

Claire Macdonald, VP & Publisher, *realscreen*, is pleased to announce the appointment of Melissa Giddens, as Associate Publisher.

Melissa was previously Sales Supervisor of *realscreen* and during her 12-year tenure at Brunico Communications Ltd. (parent company of *realscreen*), she has held a number of positions including production co-ordinator and account manager.

As Associate Publisher she will work closely with the Publisher to create solutions designed to help build our clients' businesses and will continue to maintain an account territory for *realscreen*'s print and online editions and the brand's events, including the Realscreen Summit, Factual Entertainment Forum and the Branded Entertainment Forum.

**Melissa can be contacted directly at +1-416-408-2300  
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#### A Gypsy Life For Me (8 x 60 min)

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#### Casino Confidential (10 x 30 min)

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# wild guide

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30 YEARS  
OF 'NATURE'  
ON PBS





BY KELLY ANDERSON



# CALL OF NATURE

PBS' natural history strand 'Nature' has weathered the tests of time by challenging audiences and filmmakers alike to expand their notions of wildlife television. As the iconic program celebrates its 30th year on air, *realscreen* talks to those behind the scenes to find out what 'Nature' has in store for the season ahead.

The wildlife genre of non-fiction has seen many drastic changes over the last three decades, ranging from the advancement of film technology and new scientific discoveries, to the storytelling itself. Originally focusing on the straightforward documenting of animal behaviors, today's wildlife programming is now driven by compelling and unique storylines – current staples of Thirteen/WNET New York's long-running 'Nature.'

Over 30 years, the wildlife and natural history strand has rolled with the changes in the genre and in doing so, has won more than 600 awards from the TV industry, environmental organizations and wildlife film communities during its time on PBS. Those accolades include 10 Emmy Awards,

three Peabodys, and the Christopher Parsons Outstanding Achievement Award, presented to the series last year at the Wildscreen Festival in Bristol, England.

"If you look at some of the early work that was produced for 'Nature' and some of the things that they're doing now, you can see a definite evolution," says Paula Kerger, president and chief executive officer of PBS. "I think they've constantly challenged themselves to think about where the audience is now."

## TURNING THE PAGE

The 'Nature' story begins with journalist and broadcaster George Page, who created the wildlife and natural history strand in 1982.

The wheels started to turn for Page when the BBC approached WNET to help fund a three-part series called *The Flight of the Condor*.

"George recognized that something bigger could be created," recalls current executive producer Fred Kaufman, who has worked with 'Nature' since the beginning. "He took the idea of putting money into this three-part 1982 series and [realized that if he] added to that a bunch of acquisitions that were just sitting on a shelf, he could create a series where there wasn't one and establish something on public television. It seemed like a no-brainer."

When Page retired in 1998, having introduced and narrated each episode of 'Nature' up until then, he handed the reins over to Kaufman. Page passed away from

2011's *Bears of the Last Frontier* put its presenter on a motorcycle to find bear cubs like this little fella. (Photo: Joseph Ponetcorvo/WNET)

cancer at the age of 71 in 2006. At the time of his passing, Kerger said, "The world has lost a great storyteller, and I have lost a dear friend."

Today, Kerger, who was once chief operating officer at Thirteen/WNET, says, "[Page] really was the heart and soul of 'Nature.' His greatest legacy at 'Nature' is that he put Fred Kaufman in place. I think that was just so much a part of who George was, that he made sure the series continued in the hands of someone who shared his vision and commitment for this type of filmmaking."

Over the past 30 years, titles such as *Bears of the Last Frontier*, *Urban Elephant* and *Deep Jungle* have captivated audiences, with an average of 3.3 million viewers watching the most recent season. According to Nielsen ratings, it's PBS' top documentary series.

"'Nature' has consistently been one of our most popular programs on PBS," says Kerger, taking the opportunity to take a tongue-in-cheek dig at other networks' nature programming. "What 'Nature' has been able to do on public television is really try to document the full breadth of the natural world for our viewers, not necessarily just sharks."

## CHARACTERS AND CONNECTION

"Thirty years on television is quite special but beyond that I feel like we're doing our best work," maintains Kaufman.

"In the early days we were just documenting animal behavior and the films didn't have a really compelling structure to them," he says. "That's changed. We're doing more with developing characters, introducing emotion, having events that compel you to watch these shows until the very end rather than simply doing a scientific record of how a species behaved and how an ecosystem works."

The strand produces 13 new programs a year, all coproduced with other broadcasters, with perhaps one or two acquisitions per year.

Kaufman says the 'Nature' team takes care



*Hummingbirds: Magic in the Air* used high-speed footage to provide new insight into the creatures. [Photo: Matthew Bradbury/WNET.org]

to bring storytelling methods to the strand which extend beyond wildlife and even non-fiction genres. "The techniques we use and the devices we want are no different than what you're going to find in dramatic television," he says. "We want to develop characters that are going to be interesting. We want there to be surprises...We simply don't want to be encyclopedic with our information."

For example, the 2011 doc *Bears of the Last Frontier*, a copro with National Geographic, saw Chris Morgan, an ecologist and bear biologist, journey on his motorcycle to find bears from all three of North America's species in their natural Alaskan habitat. Nearly two years in the making, over 3,000 miles were logged in the shooting, with some 500 hours of footage whittled into a three-hour 'Nature' presentation. The motorcycle element provided a contemporary hook that enabled Morgan and filmmaker Joe Pontecorvo to

show a new audience that bears are smart, adaptable and forgiving, and yet are still powerful, wild animals.

"People do still want amazing natural history footage, [but] you can't just have some dude on an adventure," Morgan says.

"What I love about 'Nature' most is the fact that they are not shy of putting decent funding in to create world-class productions," he adds. "And they're also not afraid of doing something a little different, like our series *Bears of the Last Frontier*. It's what it is all about – sticking to what [the strand is] amazingly good at, but also pushing the edges a little, with a deep concern for nature and wildlife conservation at the core," he adds.

Brian Leith, a renowned natural history filmmaker and executive producer for the BBC's Natural History Unit whose 'Nature' credits include *Deep Jungle*; *Lobo: the Wolf that Changed America* and *Elsa: the Lioness that*



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Changed the World, echoes the sentiment.

"What I have found, working with Fred and [series editor] Janet Hess, is that they're always interested in doing something a little unexpected. A lot of wildlife series seem to plow the same furrow."

Leith says he strives to make sure his films for 'Nature' have a much more emotional and intuitive connection with the audience, rather than focusing solely on creating intellectually satisfying programming.

"At a time when so much factual television – and even wildlife programming – is being trivialized and sensationalized, it is a great credit to Thirteen/WNET that it has continued to retain truthfulness, integrity and an inspirational quality in its coverage of the natural world. Never has a proper understanding of nature been more important to us all," he adds.

### THE 30TH SEASON

To mark the milestone, PBS is moving 'Nature' to primetime Wednesday nights starting October 19.

The season kicks off with *Radioactive Wolves*, which profiles the wildlife that has resurfaced in Chernobyl's contaminated area, 25 years after the notorious nuclear disaster. Narrated by Harry Smith, the film is a coproduction of epo-film, ORF/Universum and Thirteen in



*My Life as a Turkey*, part of the upcoming 30th season of 'Nature' (Photo: David Allen)

season is *My Life as a Turkey*, which Kaufman says is, despite its humorous title, one of the most touching films 'Nature' has ever aired.

The doc, produced by Passion Pictures, Thirteen and the BBC, is based on the book *Illuminations in the Flatlands*, which told the story of naturalist Joe Hutto's quest to raise 20 wild turkeys in Florida, living among them as a turkey himself. The film features a recreation

"To [Fred]'s credit he commissioned it and it is an important matter because those kinds of films are simply not commercial enough anymore and it doesn't matter how many awards [it gets] or how many people love it," maintains its producer, David Allen. "In this day and age, a film on turkeys, and a one-off at that, just does not get those kinds of ratings they need."

Perhaps 30 seasons of building the brand has led to a willingness to take a risk on films such as *My Life as a Turkey*. "At the very beginning, when you're first learning to walk is when you're the most vulnerable, whether it be in television or in the wild. Once you get your footing and you develop your personality, as a television brand, then you begin to get strength and hopefully gain some longevity," offers Kaufman.

As for what the next 30 will bring, the executive producer hopes that 'Nature' will continue to tell natural history and wildlife stories that are a bit off the beaten path.

"We want to find stories that are unique to the planet as well as to television and continue to look for ways to tell things in a revealing and lasting way," he says. "So much of what you watch on television today is simply disposable. There's no lasting value. I hope we will always have a lasting value." ■

**“Thirty years on television is quite special but beyond that I feel we’re doing our best work.”**

association with the BBC, NDR and WNET New York Public Media.

Other films slated to air in the 30th anniversary season include *Jungle Eagle*, in which filmmakers risk attack while capturing the activity of monkey-eating harpy eagles; and *The Animal House* (w/t), which goes under and above ground to show how some animals create and live in their own "homes."

One of the highlights of the upcoming

of the incredible process, with a monologue overtop from Hutto.

"Hearing [Hutto]'s insight and understanding of how these animals behaved and how they looked at him is remarkable and gives us a very privileged view into these animals," says Kaufman of the film, airing November 16. "I think that is what 'Nature' tries to do, convey a perspective on wildlife that is missing from television and the media."

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# Océans '11

Directors Jacques Perrin and Jacques Cluzaud scored a box office hit with last year's *Océans*, drawing a major theatrical crowd for their big-budget underwater spectacle. Now the team is expanding on the documentary with a major four-part series for France 2, promising to reveal another side of the world beneath the waves.

BY ADAM BENZINE

When news first broke that acclaimed French directors Jacques Perrin and Jacques Cluzaud, the duo behind the critically revered and Oscar-nominated *Winged Migration*, were reuniting for a big-budget epic examining life below the sea, expectations were high.

*Winged Migration*, a 2001 documentary looking at the migratory patterns of birds all over the world, won particular plaudits for its innovative use of new technology, which allowed cameras to silently travel alongside birds, giving the viewer the impression of flying among the flock.

With *Océans*, Perrin and his team were New technology allowed the crew to travel at speed alongside dolphins

promising an equally immersive experience, with an eye-watering budget of some €50 million (US\$72.6 million) put aside for the aim of showing audiences what it would be like to become "a fish among the fish."

As with *Winged Migration*, technology played a key part in the making of *Océans*. Among the most notable shots in the film are scenes of cameras speeding along side by side with dolphins and shoals, both above sea level and underwater.

"To be near to these creatures we needed to invent new technology – equipment that hadn't existed before," explains Perrin, *Océans* co-director and narrator. "With *Migration*, it

was the first time [filming migratory birds] using ultralight aircraft, allowing us to go up mountains and along the desert.

"For *Océans*, it was the first time we were able to travel at the speed of the fish. Before, you were always immobile – you don't move in the sea, and just look around, and the fish cross in front of your path, like in an aquarium.

"But if you can go with them at the same speed, you become 'a fish among the fish,' and the sensation, the comprehension of nature, becomes absolutely different. That was what we wanted – to be in the center, at the heart of the life of the animals of the sea,

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**“ We needed to invent new technology, equipment that hadn’t existed before. ”**

and to stay with them, even when they are speeding at 20 knots.”

Among the new technology developed to make these shots possible was an innovative torpedo camera, capable of being dragged by a boat underwater at speeds of up to 30 kilometers per hour. The team also designed a helicopter camera which could fly anywhere from 20 to 100 meters above the surface of the water, specifically to keep speed with traveling dolphins.

The project took two years to plan and four



Filmmakers Jacques Cluzaud (left) and Jacques Perrin previously collaborated on *Winged Migration*

to film, before being released theatrically last year to near universal critical acclaim.

Made by Perrin’s prodco Galatée Films in association with American firm Participant Media, Spanish indie Notro Films and French nets Canal+, France Télévisions, Pathé and TPS Star, the doc has become the third most seen French film abroad, with ticket sales of more than 10 million internationally – including three million box office admissions in France, two million in Japan, and 2.6 million in the U.S.

In the latter territory, actor Pierce Brosnan served as the narrator for the American cut of the doc, and the film received a major boost when DisneyNature – the natural history arm of the global entertainment giant – picked it up for theatrical distribution, launching it on Earth Day.

With its theatrical run complete, *Océans* is now heading for television as a 4 x 52-minute series, entitled *Le Peuple des Océans* (*The Kingdom of the Oceans*). The series premiered on France 2 on September 11, in the channel’s ‘Grandeur Nature’ slot, and will have its second window in roughly a year’s time on ARTE.

For the TV series, the tone and approach will be markedly different from the theatrical effort, with more of a focus on context and information, and less focus on creating a visceral reaction, or a “symphony of pictures,” as Perrin describes it.

The series will draw on the more than 400 hours of footage available from the four-year shoot, and will consist of entirely new footage, with none of the material that featured in the theatrical cut being re-used.

“During shooting we filmed more than 200 species, and only a few of them made it into the film,” says *Océans* co-director Jacques



The film has grossed approximately US\$82.6 million at theaters worldwide since its release

Cluzaud. "So in the series, people will discover many other species. Also, some sequences of the film had no explanation at all, whereas in the series you will have this information."

Co-scriptwriter and scientific adviser François Sarano adds that the series will attempt to explain the relationships between different species in a number of different ecosystems. "In the film, we didn't care about the place, about time – we mixed different species," he says. "The only thing we wanted was to give out emotions.

"For example, at the beginning of the film you see a sea lion bathing on the beach. We didn't care what beach or what sea lion, we just wanted to express that feeling of happiness, and we didn't need to say, 'This is a sea lion of the Galapagos.' It was the same all through the movie – the species, the time and the place had no importance. But in the series, it is completely different."

One area the team did explore the possibility of – but ultimately rejected – when making the film and series was doing the project in 3D.

"We did some tests in 3D and they were spectacular – spectacular!" enthuses Perrin. "But I don't think you can give the same emotion in 3D – you are not at the heart of the story. I think 3D is fantastic, but it's more or less for show. It depends how you use it, but it would have been difficult to make the kind of movie we wanted to make in 3D."

Cluzaud adds that cumbersome 3D cameras would not have married well with the new versatile technology they were pioneering. "If



The TV version of *Océans* will feature more context and information than the theatrical version, say the directors

*Océans* and *Le Peuple des Océans* join a rich tradition of impressive blue-chip natural history programming looking at the sea, sitting alongside high-end series such as the BBC's *The Blue Planet* and more recent theatrical efforts such as *The Cove* and *The End of the Line*.

However, the trio insists that what makes their filmmaking different is a willingness to anthropomorphize and attempt to create an emotional connection onscreen, rather

explain the natural history of one animal or another. They always stay in the ecosystem and they don't try to make an animal a character or give it emotions."

Perrin sums up his take on the difference more succinctly: "*Planet Earth* speaks to your brain, whereas *Océans* speaks to your heart." ■

**“In the film, we didn't care about place or time. The only thing we wanted to give was emotions.”**

you wanted to shoot *Océans* in 3D it would not be the same film – you cannot go fast underwater with two cameras or a big system, you have to have cameras that are small yet still powerful enough for the big screen," he explains.

than bombarding the viewer with facts and information.

Taking the BBC's box office hit *Earth* as an example, Sarano opines that even on the big screen, "the BBC stays in the traditional point of view of the documentary – they try to



The team considered shooting in 3D, but found the technology too restrictive

## COMING TO AMERICA

Two new shiny-floor game show series are coming to U.S. broadcast networks via international format creators. Here, *realscreen* takes a sneak peek at Dick de Rijk's *You Deserve It*, coming to ABC, and *Who's Still Standing?*, heading to NBC.

BY KELLY ANDERSON

The shiny floor game show is experiencing something of a resurgence in America, spurred on by the U.S. audience's appetite for big, boisterous unscripted variety and reality competition programs. In the year ahead, two more glitz game formats are heading to the U.S. via broadcast nets ABC and NBC, and this time they're coming from Germany and Israel.

Tel Aviv-based Armoza Formats sold *Who's Still Standing?* to NBC, which will air nine episodes of the game show this winter. NBC commissioned the format after its initial successful run as *Still Standing* in Israel.

The format takes the basic trivia question quiz show and adds a twist, a trap door that drops the contestant out of the studio if they answer incorrectly. "It's very dynamic, with fast-paced questions. It is something that is appealing to the whole family; the tension that if you have the wrong answer, there's a trap door and you disappear," explains Avi Armoza, CEO of Armoza Formats.

He hopes that *Who's Still Standing?* will open a door to more of its formats being sold to the U.S. broadcaster. "We believe that once you build a relationship, there is potential for other deals to follow," he says.

Elsewhere, ABC will launch *You Deserve It*, from Germany's Red Arrow Entertainment Group, produced by Santa Monica-based Kinetic Content, which is part of Red Arrow.

The six-episode series takes a more altruistic approach to the game show. Instead of having a contestant go through the game to claim his or her cash prize, here contestants pick out people special to them who will receive the winnings, unbeknownst to them.

The format from Dick de Rijk (*Deal or No Deal*) features game play in the studio, and a second location and second host that cuts live to the surprise reveal.

"[De Rijk] wanted to build an emotional rollercoaster [and] a really big emotional surprise moment," says Red Arrow Entertainment

Off you go! A contestant gets the heave-ho on *Still Standing*

---

Group's director of international distribution Jens Richter, of the company's development partner.

The goal was to launch *You Deserve It* in the U.S. first, based on De Rijk's track record Stateside. "We believe this is network television. It's big, surprising, it's innovative," says Richter.

Kinetic CEO Chris Coelen will executive produce, along with Kinetic colleagues Matilda Zoltowski and Jeff Trask, and De Rijk. The game show is currently in production, with an air date yet to be announced.

"With a lot of game shows, you play for some abstract amount of money, and if you look at it, it's very disconnected from reality," says Coelen. "Contestants walk out of the studio and say, 'Oh man, I only won \$150,000,' but that's life-changing money. [With *You Deserve It*], there's a player who is doing something absolutely selflessly, playing for someone else." ■





## HAIRY BIKERS HEAD TO U.S.

BY BARRY WALSH

*The Hairy Bikers* format is heading to the U.S., via BBC Worldwide Productions and History.

Originally launched on the BBC and featuring David Myers and Simon King, the American version, slated to premiere on October 14, will feature Paul Patrenella, a four-star, classically trained French chef, and motorcycle mechanic Bill Allen.

The series will serve as a food travelog with a historical flair, as the Bikers blaze their trails across the U.S. to cook and eat with the locals in assorted towns and, according to History, “immerse themselves in local American history and long-standing traditions.”

They will also do whatever it takes to bring food to the table on their journey, including cleaning roadkill, harvesting wheat for beer and tracking down wild boars.

The title has been sold in more than 160 territories worldwide, including Australia, China, Egypt, Italy, Norway, Slovenia and Taiwan. The original BBC2 series has finished its eighth season.

The executive producer for the series is Dawn Fitzgerald. Executive producer for History is Julian P. Hobbs, and exec producers for BBC Worldwide Productions are Elli Hakami and Jane Tranter.

The U.S. *Hairy Bikers*: left, Paul Patrenella; right, Bill Allen. Credit: Ryan Booth

## FACTUAL FORMATS TRAVEL FOR TARGET

BY KELLY ANDERSON

Target Entertainment has sold a raft of factual formats to Spain, the UK, Sweden and Austria.

Spain's Telecinco has acquired Rain Media's *Restaurant In Our Living Room* (pictured), following its successful debut on TMC in France earlier this year. The series, which sees culinary couples battling to open a restaurant in their own homes, was first broadcast on the now-defunct Virgin 1 in the UK.

A third series of Lighthearted Entertainment's *Next!*, was commissioned by Antena Neox in Spain. The 60 Spanish episodes will be locally produced by Zebra Producciones.

*Tool Academy* returns to British television this fall, with Objective Productions producing a second series for E4. Target has also sold the format rights to Viasat in Sweden, which will produce a local Swedish version.

Lastly, *Popstars* is to be produced in Austria for the first time by Tresor for Puls 4, and Virgin 1's *Why Men Watch Porn* is being reversioned for Israel's Reshet, this time as a two-parter. ■



*Restaurant In Our Living Room* is heading to Spain

# TIME OF TRANSITION

BY BARRY WALSH

**C**haz Bono is used to living in the limelight. Formerly Chastity Bono, the child of Sonny Bono and Cher has become a vocal advocate for issues affecting the LGBT community, and has authored three books.

The glare of the spotlight intensified with the release of *Becoming Chaz*, a documentary from World of Wonder Productions that unflinchingly captures the events surrounding Bono's gender reassignment surgery and transition from female to male. The film's premiere at Sundance elicited rave reviews, as did its airing on the Oprah Winfrey Network as the first film in OWN's Documentary Club. The film has garnered three Emmy nominations (winners weren't announced by press time), with a sequel, and potentially a series on the way. Adding that to the news of his upcoming appearance on the next season of ABC's *Dancing With the Stars*, Bono says he's happy to re-enter the media fray if it also creates wider exposure for the transgender community and, in turn, understanding.

#### Did it take a lot of courage to expose this part of your life in a documentary?

For me, the courage was in making the decision to do this [have the operation] and knowing I wouldn't be able to do it privately, and that took many, many years. When I finally did make that decision, I knew I'd have to talk about it or it would turn really ugly. I knew I wanted to get my side of the story out there and really try to own it and not let it be tabloid fodder.

#### Was there ever any point during filming where you wanted to step back and turn the cameras off?

No. I really felt comfortable throughout the whole thing. I'm not the kind of person who does things that don't feel right to me. I'm not easily swayed. So we'd talked a lot about what we were going to cover and that part was very collaborative. There was never a point where I felt uncomfortable.

#### What can you tell us about the upcoming follow-up doc?

We've been filming it. It's less about the transition and more about life after that — life now. I think it'll be fun. It definitely focuses on my girlfriend and I. In the first film, Jenny [Elias] really added a lot of necessary light moments, as well as a way in for a lot of people who didn't know much about the subject — they could relate to her.

#### What sort of feedback have you received from those within and outside of the transgender community?

From everyone outside of [the] transgender [community], I get a lot of people saying they never really understood the issue until they saw the film. From transgender people or even parents of transgender people, I've had a lot of people reach out to me and send me examples of how the film has helped them. Whether it means being treated better at work, or having parents or family members who'd shut them out earlier reach out to them again — it's really tangible stuff like that. ■





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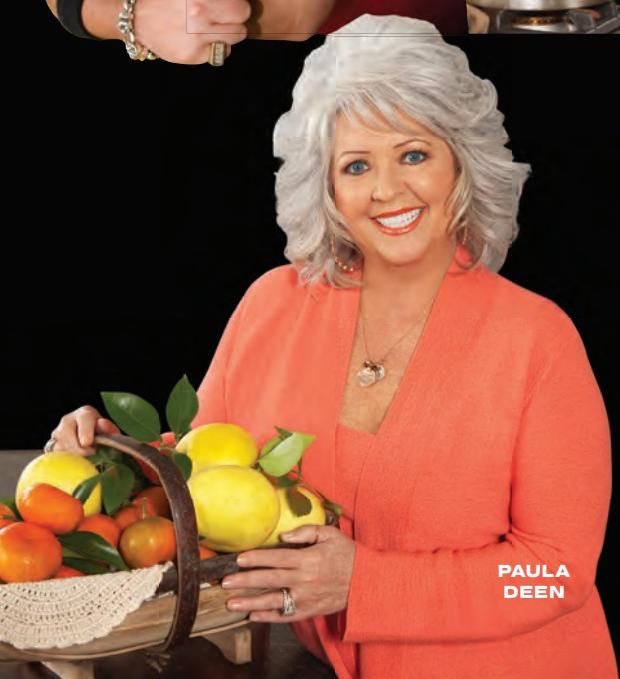
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